

CATCH THE VISION OF *The Well-Educated Heart*

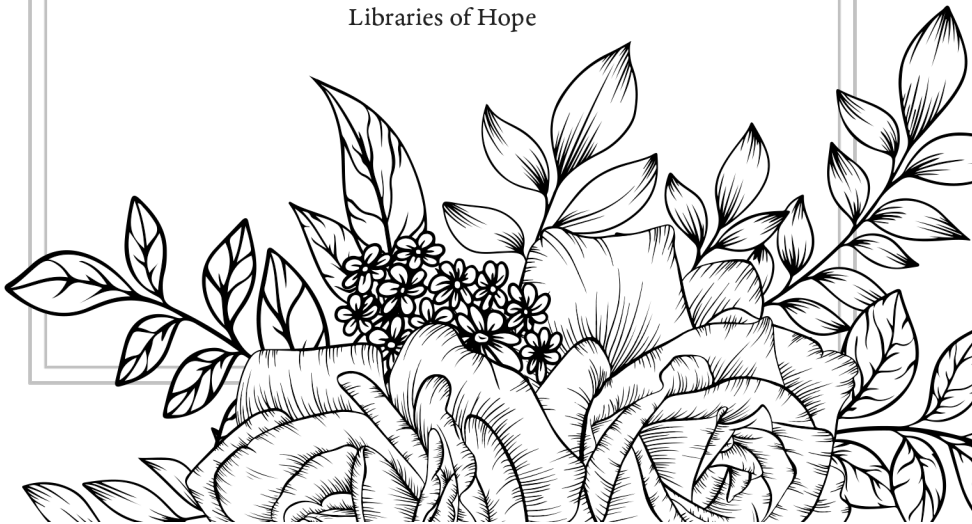
MARLENE PETERSON



CATCH THE VISION OF
The Well-Educated Heart

BY MARLENE PETERSON

Libraries of Hope



Catch the Vision of the Well-Educated Heart

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Contents

Orientation 1
Welcome! 7
My Wish for You 9
Introduction 11
Introduction 13
Section One: A Mother's Heart 23
Mothers Matter 25
Speech Delivered at World Congress of Families IX 30
The Richest Gift 38
Section Two: A Change of Heart 47
The Difference Between Mind and Heart 49
Some 'Heart' Wisdom from the Wizard of Oz 51
New Common Core Standards 52
Romancing the Heart/Building the Kingdom Within 72
The Pattern for Learning and Creation 82
Heart and Art 89
Section Three: Joy is Everywhere 91
How Do We Grow Our Capacity for Joy? 93
Music 106
Visual Arts 116
The Angelus 129
Poetry 132
Story 144
Nature 166

Sleeping Beauty and True Love's First Kiss 180
Section Four: Heart Before Mind 197
The Whole Apple of Learning 199
Let Them Eat Cake 211
What About Math? 213
The Rhythm of Life is a Powerful Beat 217
Section Five: The Grand Buffet 231
Developmental Levels 233
The Rotation Schedule 251
Forgotten Classics Family Library 263
The Unplanner 280
Notebooking 284
Delphian Course 293
Section Six: Journey of a Lifetime 299
Five Things Review 301
Belle Ame Dream 326
Corragio! 337
Concluding Thoughts 339
Where to Go From Here 346
Resources 359

NOTE

The contents of this book were originally delivered as "talks" in audio and visual formats. They can still be listened to/watched at librariesofhope.com in the Catch the Vision section.

This is the first time the text of all of these messages have been brought together into one place. The creation of this book follows the principle of heart education: oral before written. That which is delivered orally comes from the heart in a way that the written language alone can't capture. See if you can "feel" the difference.

Orientation

Welcome! I am Marlene Peterson, the founder and creator of Libraries of Hope and the finder of the Well-Educated Heart philosophy of learning. This is the home of Mothers of Influence and my message is that Mothers Matter.

One of the founders of the modern-day Women's Movement wrote:

> When the mother learns the divine secrets of her power…then shall the blessed prophecy of the world's peace come true…[1]
>
> Mother-love works magic on humanity.[2]

While my message is aimed at mothers because of her divine gifts in nurturing hearts, The Well-Educated Heart is for anyone seeking to live a much more abundant and joyful life. It is created as an uplift for humanity by softening hard hearts. You will notice an emphasis on the Arts: Music, Paintings, Poetry, Story. There is a simple explanation for that. The definition of barbarism is ignorance of the Arts; and conversely, the definition of civilization is knowledge of the Arts.

The Arts have the power to refine and ennoble us. They are the keys that unlock truths to the deepest part of the heart

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[1] Frances Willard quoted in *Black and White: or the Saloon Versus Temperance*, by James Henry Potts (1908)

[2] Frances Willard quoted in *Brief Sketch of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union*.

where they can effect change. Their power to change us is why it has always been the poet, the storyteller, the musician, the artist who has reset the course for good.

We are gathering a community of families who are learning the lost arts of educating hearts through the arts. We seek to preserve a culture of Faith, Freedom and Family and a love of the Good, the True and the Beautiful in a time when all of these things are under attack. It takes courage to walk this path.

Our objective is Simple: JOY. After all, "Joy," as C.S. Lewis wrote, "is the serious business of heaven."[3]

This work necessarily involves educating our young, so you will find many homeschoolers in our community and many resources for them to use. But the things you will learn and the resources we provide can be used if your kids attend public or private schools, are all grown up, or even if you have never had children of your own.

The painting you see on the home page of our website is called *In Thought* by the Danish painter, H. A. Brendekilde. To me, it relays a sense of longing for something better. You might say it embodies Hope.

It was that longing for something better that gave explorers the courage to leave familiar shorelines and risk the voyage over an unknown deep where they discovered a New World. Actually it was New to them, but it was an old and ancient world.

I, too, have been on a journey of discovery in searching for a better world, and in the exploration process, I also discovered a new-old world. The inhabitants of this world lived in an era known as the Golden Age of Children's Literature at the end of the 19th century and into the 20th. These men and women were inspired educators of the heart.

As I immersed myself in their writings, they became like

[3] C.S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer* (1964).



In Thought by H.A. Brendekilde

dear friends to me. I lived with them. They were delightful company—refined, cultured, noble, humble, faithful, brave, selfless, wise and above all, joyful. They gave me a taste of what a rich, abundant life felt like. I read their words and thought their thoughts until they were so woven into me, I could no longer determine where their thoughts ended and mine began. Their influence lifted me and made me want to be better. I felt my heart and understanding expand in ways I had never before experienced. They opened my eyes to the beauty and truth that has always surrounded me, but somehow, I never saw it.

I felt a Light shining through them and that Light changed me just by being in their presence.

As a mother nurtures her own heart and fills it with Light, that same Light will influence those around her—especially her children.

I have been bringing back treasures from this New-Old world for you to nurture your heart with and have loved sharing them, but I have only begun to discover the buried treasure. My invitation to you is to come back with me and see for yourself. There are still so many riches waiting for you.

There is nothing complicated here, but it requires most of us to look at learning through new eyes. Matters of the heart cannot be taught directly. It requires 'catching a vision' and that moment happens differently for each person. But when it does, it is very freeing and you will start seeing lots of things through new eyes. It's hard to explain. It's like a light turns on inside.

I often hear—"Just tell me what to do." I'm sorry, but I never tell you what to do. That's not my job.

This is not a paint by number. You are an artist and the masterpiece you create will be entirely your own. The Well-Educated Heart helps you discover the artist already within you.

Like 18th-century Swiss educator, Pestalozzi, wrote:

> "I wish to wrest education from…cheap, artificial teaching tricks, and entrust it to the eternal process of nature herself; to the light which God has kindled and kept alive in the hearts of fathers and mothers."[4]

Part way through Columbus' voyage, his old means of navigation failed him and he had to rely more on the Celestial bodies above him and to listen to the instincts of his heart. You will find yourself in the same boat. As Charlotte Mason taught: True education is between a child's soul and God.

You may as well attempt to garden without sunshine as think you can do this work without God.

All denominations of faith are welcome. I, personally, am a follower of Jesus Christ. Love is the foundation of His and

[4] Quoted in Silber's *Pestalozzi: The Man and His Work* (1965).

our work. In fact, His work is our work.

As you move forward on this path, if you choose to take it, be kind to yourself. I often hear moms express regret that they didn't know these things earlier; that it's too late for them. There is no such thing as too late. I didn't learn these things until after all of my nine children were grown up and had moved away from home. Your influence has no boundaries or timetable. As C.S. Lewis taught: "You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending."

There is no way to test and measure the success of this philosophy. It can only be seen in its fruits. Here is a sampling of the 'fruit' I receive from mothers nearly every single day:

- "I'm starting once again to really internalize that what I do at home matters. I feel alive again."
- "Rather than enduring motherhood and having small moments of joy with my children, my joy and gratitude is overflowing and I see the essential role I play in being a mother."
- "Thank you for empowering me as a mother. I no longer feel it is a waste of my time. A year ago, I truly believed it was."
- "I sit in awe constantly at how much my heart grows in this process. It hasn't happened over night, but slowly as I make my way through all this incredible information, I find myself letting go more and more of what others tell me I need to teach my children and trusting my heart instead."
- "You've opened another outlet for learning on a deeper level."
- "It is like the world is really a thousand times fuller,

deeper and grander than what we normally see, and hear."

- "I have noticed a definite difference in the amount of questions I have about life and the amount of answers I am receiving."
- "The Well-Educated Heart has truly changed our family. You are an inspiration to not only moms teaching their children but to grown men trying to run a company."
- "My marriage imploded and we escaped to a homeless shelter. Well-Educated Heart and Mothers of Influence gave me the confidence, encouragement and hope I desperately needed."
- "All I can say is the Well-Educated Heart was an answer to my heart-felt prayers. Mine and my family's lives have changed forever through the process and I know God led me here by nothing less than a Miracle."
- "It was the paradigm shift I'd been praying for, for years."

> "Oh, if the world could only stop long enough for one generation of mothers to be alright, what a Millennium could be begun in thirty years!"[5]

Can we be that one generation of mothers?

[5] Helen Hunt Jackson quoted in Sarah Knowles Bolton's *Lives of Girls Who Became Famous* (1886).

Welcome!

You are about to embark on a journey of a lifetime in which learning and understanding will unfold layer upon layer and deepen over time. This introductory course is designed to help you start a daily habit of feeding your heart. Your bodies need to eat food every single day and your heart has the same requirement. Overeating or eating too fast causes indigestion. So allow yourself the time to reflect on what you're learning. There's no rush here. And the learning is never going to end. Even five minutes a day will begin to yield good fruit.

For some of you, the ideas presented here will go against everything you've ever thought about how children learn. For others, the ideas will resonate with beliefs you already carry with you. Either way, I hope you'll enter with an open heart and that you'll find something that will enrich your life and those in the sphere of your influence.

The course is designed after the same Pattern for Learning and Creation you'll learn about in Section 2. This Introductory Course is largely the 'Heart' part where you'll begin to catch a vision of possibilities and increase your desire to learn more. No one is going to tell you exactly what you should read or what you should get out of it, which is the same process you'll be encouraged to use with your children in the heart years. Rather, you'll find yourself taking from it what you are ready to take from it. If you go back through later, you'll find new connections and insights, not because the words or pictures have changed, but because you will have

changed.

Keep a journal nearby to write down those impressions that come to you as you look for principles or as ideas strike your heart. Remember—the more you write, the more you learn. Repetition is key to learning and writing thoughts down is part of that repetition process.

This is a joyful journey and I'm so happy to have you along.

With love,
Marlene

My Wish for You

By Charles Livingston Snell (1914)

This is my wish for you…
That the spirit of beauty
may continually hover about you
and fold you close within the
tenderness of her wings.
That each beautiful and gracious thing in life
May be unto you as a symbol of good
for your soul's delight;
That sun-glories, and star-glories,
leaf-glories and bark-glories,
Flower glories and the glories that lurk
in the grasses of the field;
Glories of mountains, and oceans,
and little streams of running waters,
Glories of song, of poesy, of all the arts
May be to you as sweet, abiding influences
That will illuminate your life and make you glad.
That your soul may be as an alabaster cup,
filled to overflowing
With the mystical wine of beauty and love;
That happiness may put her arms around you
And wisdom make your soul serene.
This is my wish for you.



Introduction



Introduction

Since we'll be spending quite a bit of time together, you may wonder who is talking to you. So I'd like to start by introducing myself and telling you a little bit of the story behind Libraries of Hope.

Although I will be directing much of what I say to mothers teaching children, these ideas are for anyone who wants to live a richer, more abundant life.

I am the founder of Libraries of Hope and the finder of the Well-Educated Heart philosophy of learning and living. My husband, Brent, and I have raised eight daughters and one son. I graduated from Brigham Young University with a degree in Child Development and Family Relations, but my real learning has taken place in the laboratory of my home.

I have always been restless where education is concerned. That is why we homeschooled, public schooled, private schooled, charter schooled, online schooled, unschooled and did combinations of all of the above. By current educational standards, you might say we are a success story. All nine of our children have graduated from universities, with several earning advanced degrees.

But I always felt like something was missing.

Many years ago when our youngest was getting ready to leave home, a friend asked if I'd like to help her with a little school she had adopted in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya. This educational restlessness returned as I looked into the faces of these little children in the pictures she showed me. They met in a makeshift classroom with hot tin walls. The chiggers bit their bare feet on the dirt floor. Many of them were orphaned

and showed up to school with hungry bellies. But there they were, sitting on crude wooden benches, eager to learn.

But to learn what? Many of these children would likely never grow to adulthood. Few would have a chance to go to college. There weren't a lot of jobs out there. Because there were no books, they had to rely on rote memorization of facts in order to pass standardized tests. And I wondered, what's the point?

And it got me thinking: What is the purpose of education? I saw one study where 365 people were asked that very question. They got 365 unique answers. How can we think we can design a uniform system of education when we can't even agree why we're doing it? What I wanted to know was what is God's purpose and reason for education and what are His methods? If I could find the answers to those questions, I knew that the lives of these little children would be blessed no matter what life dealt them.

It set me on an intense course of study for the next year. I turned to the writings of great spiritual leaders and to the scriptures themselves. Along the way, I compared what I was learning with different educational models. I took hundreds of pages of notes. All that learning distilled down to two basic truths for me.

I now believe the purpose of education is to prepare children to live lives of maximum joy and the method can best be summed up in a phrase I took from the writings of Charlotte Mason: True education is between a child's soul and God.

A simple pattern for learning unfolded and I came to appreciate the powerful influence of fine literature, art, poetry and music and the sweet influences of nature on the hearts of our children and a mother's unique role as the best educator of a child's heart. But let me remind you again: if you are a woman who has never had children of your own or whose children are all grown up, you are still a vital part of this work. Your influence will be felt in ways you may not now imagine.

All the things I talk about will bring an added measure of joy into your life.

And now I'm going to go out on a limb and share some deeply personal thoughts. But if you're going to take this journey of the heart with me and trust the teachings I am going to share with you, it's important you understand the why behind what I am doing.

I think the why can be traced back to a simple prayer that has been a constant in my life: Lord, please make me an instrument in thy Hands. Without Him, I am nothing. I am not the Founder of the Well-Educated Heart philosophy; I'm a finder. I have more questions than answers. But I love sharing with you what I am learning along the way. When some of you tell me you want to meet me, it makes me uncomfortable in some ways—not that I don't want to meet you—I absolutely do! I love you! But like Mr. Rogers used to say, I'm not a fancy person. I stumble over my words in private conversation. I'm awkward and actually very shy. And there's a part of me that worries that you'll be disappointed with me and that somehow I'll be a stumbling block to the message I feel to deliver.

Yet, I cannot deny the clear and distinct impressions that have come to me over the years, starting with direction to create a small library of books and to call it Libraries of Hope. It was to be filled with books that would give children hope because they would be filled with truth and light. I had no idea how to go about such a thing. More than one person said, "You know, children aren't reading very much anymore, especially old books without any pictures. There really isn't a market for what you are doing." And I was asked how I planned on marketing this; what my business plan was; how was I going to get the funds to publish the books. The truth was, I had no business or marketing plans. I didn't exactly know why I was doing what I was doing. I was just doing what I felt I had been asked to do. And the feeling that I had was

to not concern myself with that. In my heart, I was told the Lord was preparing a network of mothers and when the time was right, He was going to start writing messages on my heart, that when I delivered them, it would resonate in their hearts and these mothers would be drawn to the message and would want to learn more.

I believe you are the fulfillment of that promise.

For years, the work I was doing was met with apathy and disinterest. And then those messages started coming into my heart. And I have been amazed as I have watched the Lord do His work. I have heard from mothers from around the world—from Australia and New Zealand, from Denmark, Norway, Germany, Italy, Africa, Mexico. From all over the United States from Alaska to the East Coast. And frequently they say this: I don't know how I found you, but when I heard your message, it resonated in my heart and I want to know more.

A few years into the project, I became discouraged. So very few people cared about the books I was gathering. Was I just wasting my time?

In that state of mind, I woke up one morning with one clear thought on my mind: Read the Book of Enoch, and my first reaction was, "Is there a Book of Enoch?" I can tell you there is. I found it online in the Apocrypha. The Book of Enoch is said to contain Enoch's vision of our day. I started to read and wasn't really getting anything, but I felt to just keep reading. When I got to the very end, the words lit up and made my heart burn. Enoch saw the books of our day! First he said that "Sinners will alter and pervert the words of righteousness in many ways, and will speak wicked words, and lie, and practice great deceits, and write books concerning their words."

We see that, don't we?

But here's the good news: "To the righteous and the wise shall be given books of joy, of integrity and of great wisdom.

To them shall books be given in which they will rejoice and acquire the knowledge of every upright path."

I am here to say we have been given that great gift! We are living in the day of the harvest when all the greatest books from all the greatest hearts of all the ages have been preserved and gathered and placed in the hands of children in even the humblest home, thanks to our modern-day gift of technology. As John Ruskin wrote: "Will you go and gossip with your housemaid or your stable boy, when you may talk with kings and queens, while this eternal court is open to you, with its society wide as the world…the chosen, the mighty, of every place and time?"

Your job as a mother is to awaken the desire to read them which will largely be accomplished through the books you read aloud and your own love for them.

When I wonder if the gathering of books is worth the time, I think of a couple of sweet mothers I met at a conference who live in a remote area in Canada. They had internet but had little access to books. With great emotion, they said they had found my Libraries of Hope and were so thankful they now had books with which to teach their children.

If I had millions of dollars and could have hired New York's finest marketing team, they could not have designed a marketing strategy that would have had the direct global reach the Lord has quietly been accomplishing as He gathers mothers one by one.

I am constantly reminded by Him that numbers don't matter. For those of you who are frustrated that your efforts to gather others often seem futile, you're not alone. I think it's worth sharing part of an article I've shared before that addresses this very thing. It was written in 1936 by an Albert Jay Nock and it was entitled "Isaiah's Job."

The writer started by describing a conversation he had had with a man who felt like he had a philosophy and a message that would save mankind and that he was going to spend

the rest of his life spreading his message far and wide in an attempt to try and reach the Masses.

Nock mustered the courage to tell the man that the masses would not care two pins about his doctrine and he proceeded to paraphrase the job of Isaiah. In a time of great commotion and unrest, the Lord commissioned the prophet Isaiah to go out and warn the people. He said, in essence, "Tell them what is wrong, and why and what is going to happen unless they have a change of heart and straighten up. Don't mince matters. Make it clear that they are positively down to their last chance. Give it to them good and strong and keep on giving it to them. I suppose perhaps I ought to tell you," he added, "that it won't do any good. The official class and their intelligentsia will turn up their noses at you and the masses will not even listen. They will all keep on in their own ways until they carry everything down to destruction, and you will probably be lucky if you get out with your life."

Isaiah had been willing to take on the job, but now a new face was put on it. It raised the obvious question: Why, if all that were so—if the enterprise were to be a failure from the start—was there any sense to starting it?

"Ah," the Lord said, "you do not get the point. There is a Remnant there that you know nothing about. They are obscure, unorganized, inarticulate, each one rubbing along as best as he can. They need to be encouraged and braced up because when everything has gone completely to the dogs, they are the ones who will come back and build up a new society; and meanwhile, your preaching will reassure them and keep them hanging on. Your job is to take care of the Remnant, so be off now and set about it."

Now I make no claims to be an Isaiah or a prophet—far from it! But the same feeling has been placed in my heart—to tend to and strengthen the Remnant, even if that number is very small. The writer goes on to say that in any given

society the Remnant is always an unknown quantity. He said when you are called to tend to the Remnant, "Two things you do know and no more: first, that they exist; second, that they will find you." In fact, they will find you without you doing anything about it.

But the Lord knows who they are. Elijah had been given the same job as Isaiah and he finally fled to the desert because he feared for his life. The Lord asked him what he was doing out there and his answer implied that he was afraid if he was killed, the truth would die with him. He thought he was the only one left when the Lord told him, "I don't mind telling you that there are seven thousand of them back there in Israel whom it seems you have not heard of, but you may take My word for it that they are there."

Sometimes you may feel all alone. You may feel obscure, inarticulate, rubbing along as best as you can. But the Lord knows you and you are counted and valued by Him. He takes the weak things of the world and makes them strong. He is an artist and you are His masterpiece in progress. And how do you know if you are of the Remnant? If you love the Lord and seek to do His will, you are of the Remnant.

Throughout the history of the world, in the middle of chaos and destruction, He is always preparing and preserving seed for a new planting. I know from the seasons that winter is necessary for an abundant spring. I've seen the seasons in history. There is no question in my mind that we are living in a day of great harvest, but winter is coming. And the seed must be preserved if there are to be green shoots in the spring.

The Old Testament prophets were masters of imagery and of layered and even hidden meanings. Many interpretations have been given of Malachi's words where he expressed that the hearts of the children shall be turned to their fathers and the hearts of the fathers turned to the children, or the earth shall be wasted.

As I study history, I find my heart turning to the wisdom

of our fathers. The beauty of our day is that we don't have to start from scratch. We have so many lessons to draw from that teach us how to govern nations, how to live together in harmony, how to live lives of joy and abundance. Many of those lessons come from seeing what hasn't worked. Yet, as I see solutions that are being proposed in today's world, they are coming from a place of total ignorance of how they played out before. History seems doomed to repeat itself because our hearts will not turn to the wisdom of our fathers who came before us. Nor do we make decisions based on the consequences our choices will have in the lives of our children and those who come after us. We live very much in a day when we think only of ourselves; what's good for me. We've lost that spirit of the Pilgrims who understood they were only laying a foundation for those who followed.

Turning 60 a few years ago was a turning point in my life for me. I suddenly realized I don't have a whole lifetime ahead. There are things I am not going to be able to do. If I plant a tree in my yard, I may not live long enough to see it grow big enough to give me shade. But the thought struck me: then plant it for those who will come after you, that they can sit under the tree that will give them shade.

I feel that may be one of the messages of Malachi to us. We are the connecting link between the past and the future. We have to look backward, and using the lessons of the past, make wise decisions with an eye to those who will follow us.

That is why you see me placing history at the center of all learning at the Well-Educated Heart (WEH). But it's history in a broad sense. It's a way of learning the lessons of our fathers. And those lessons have been preserved in art, in music, in literature, in poetry as well as the pages of historical fact. For me, History is not just a subject in a curriculum to be checked off a list.

There has never, in the history of the world, been a generation that has had access to the wisdom the world has left us

as this generation has. And there is no other group in the world that has the influence on the generations to follow that a mother has. That's why I constantly encourage you to store up the lessons of history in your own heart; to learn the languages of art and music and poetry and fine literature so that you can understand what our fathers are trying to tell us. And then, as you find those gems of wisdom, to preserve them in Books of Remembrance, not only for you, but for your children, grandchildren and great grandchildren who will follow.

I have a vision of a Remnant of mothers of refined tastes; mothers who are well-educated, cultured and articulate. They are to be a force of great influence in the world. That will never happen without effort and the willingness to do hard things. I totally get that you're busy. Like Martha, you are careful and troubled about many things. But I believe, because I have experienced it for myself, that if you have but the desire in your heart, and will act upon that desire by doing what you can do, the Lord will magnify your efforts, whatever they are.

A caution: Don't get caught in the letter of what you're reading. Don't make it a checklist. There's something beyond the words themselves you are looking for. Like Mr. Rogers taught, it will be a voice found in the white space between the lines.

C.S. Lewis wrote:

> The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust to them; it was not in them, it only came through them, and what came through them was longing.… For they are not the thing itself; they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited...

And as to the white space learning, Lewis continued: "Almost our whole education has been directed to silencing this

shy, persistent inner voice."[6]

It is hearing this inner voice that is at the heart of what you will be learning going forward.

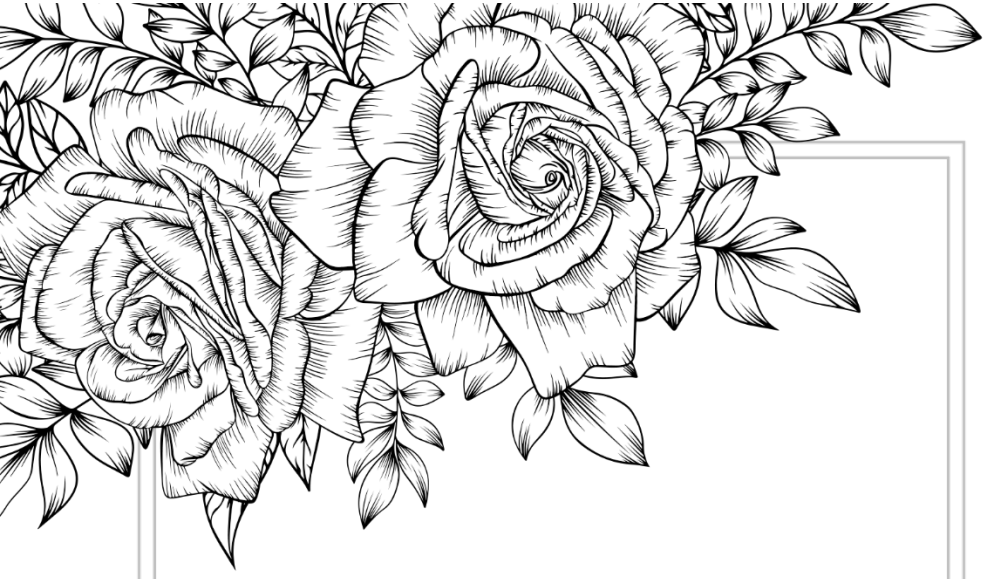
I share 18th century educator Pestalozzi's desires as he wrote: "*I wish to wrest education from…cheap, artificial teaching tricks, and entrust it to the eternal process of nature herself; to the light which God has kindled and kept alive in the hearts of fathers and mothers; to the interests of parents who desire that their children grow up in favour with God and with men…*

"*[Love is] the sole and everlasting foundation in which to work. Without love, neither the physical nor the intellectual power will develop naturally.*"[7]

Knowing how to nurture the heart of a child is of great worth. Our world desperately needs more mothers who have learned this prized and rare art. Are you willing to pay the price to learn? Then let's get started.

[6] C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory* (1949).

[7] Quoted in Silber's *Pestalozzi: The Man and His Work* (1965).



SECTION ONE:

A Mother's Heart

Why is a mother a child's best teacher?



MOTHER-LOVE PLAYS A VITAL ROLE IN NURTURING HEARTS

The field is white and ready to harvest, but we are faced with a generation that has little desire to reap. Mothers, this is your moment in history. Within your homes are the chosen harvesters and it is your privilege and upon you rests the responsibility to light fires of desire within their hearts.

No one can do it better than you!

Mothers Matter

Jesus often talked of little things, a little leaven that could raise an entire loaf of bread, a small candle that could light an entire dark room, a little salt that could savor an entire meal. He spoke of a tiny mustard seed of faith, a pearl of great price, a lily in the field. He knew, by small and simple means, great things could be brought to pass. Were the world willing, observing one simple law—love God and your neighbor—could replace all the vexatious complexities of government and legalities and actually heal our world. Love would ensure there would be no poor among us. No one would live isolated or alone. We could live in peace and harmony. Simple? Yes. Easy? Evidently not. But heaven has a plan, it has always had a plan, and it involves homes and mothers.

Poets and wise people have known, "Oh, wondrous power, how little understood, entrusted to a mother's mind alone to fashion genius from the soul for good." Pope Pius IX knew, give me good mothers and I will change the world. Napoleon knew, the great need of France is mothers. Muhammad knew, paradise is at the feet of the mothers. Helen Hunt Jackson knew, oh, if the world could only stop long enough for one generation of mothers to be all right, what a millennium could be begun in thirty years.

The very foundation of our national life is laid in the home, and the wife and mother is the center, the mainspring of all true home life. Our wives and mothers have as yet hardly entered the outer chamber of the beautiful edifice of the ideal home of the future. It is the holy of holies, and in it lies the

very secret of human progress. The highest civilizations have scarcely as yet glimpsed the possibilities of home.

The Norwegian poet Henrik Ibsen said, "To the woman, then, we must look for the solution of the problems of humanity. It must come from them as mothers. That is the mission that lies before them." Behind the Greek poet Pindar, who was given credit for ushering in the golden age of Greece, were two women, Clyrtice and Myrna, who sang songs into his heart. Behind the great Pericles was the influence of his cultured and refined wife, Aspasia. Behind the first martyrs for religious freedom, seven noble and strong sons, was their Jewish mother Hannah, pleading with them to stand strong in their faith, though it cost them their lives. Behind the greatness of Julius Caesar was his mother, Aurelia. Behind two thousand stripling warriors were mothers who never doubted. Jesus' first teacher was his mother in the home. She remained a support to him his entire life. When his disciples fled in fear, she was found kneeling at the cross.

History has accorded the mother scant recognition. Her biography has seldom been written, and the annals of time record scarce more than a passing word to bear testimony to that potent influence which, more than all else, has shaped the destinies of the world's distinguished men. When the great Swiss educator, Pestalozzi, studied the problem of the misery around him, he concluded, "The eternal laws of nature lead me back to your hand, mother. Mother, I can keep my innocence, my love, my obedience, the excellence of my nobler nature all at your side only. Maternal love is the first agent in education. If I can only in some slight degree succeed in making the art of education begin in the sanctuary of the home." He died feeling like he had failed, but holding on to the hope that, even if it took three hundred years for his ideas to take root, his work would not be in vain.

Inspired by Pestalozzi, Friedrich Frobel picked up the torch. The first kindergartens were formed to train mothers

to teach in their homes. The government shut him down because they saw the kindergartens as a threat to their authority. But other educators caught the same flame. Maria Montessori's work was primarily aimed at mothers of young children in the home. She said, "It seems so self-evident as to be almost a childish statement to assert that only two things are needed in order to establish peace in the world—1: Above all, a new type of man, a better humanity. 2: An environment that should no longer set a limit to the infinite desire of man. A better humanity is the job for mothers, and then that better humanity will build the better environment." Charlotte Mason also wrote for mothers in the home, where the woman receives from the Spirit of God Himself the intuitions into the child's character.

Despite all the evidence that mothers in the home can shape the world, we find ourselves in a culture that demeans and devalues motherhood and homemaking. The very movement that was meant to elevate motherhood, that claimed mother love works magic for humanity, has devolved into something that would horrify the founders of the women's movement, who, by the way, never had children of their own. A hundred years ago, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, who had helped bring Montessori ideas to America, reflected that a "process has been going on for a long time where the so-called natural and domestic occupations will be taken away from us, the women, and the very shame of our enforced idleness will drive us to follow men into the workforce." She added, "but that time is still in the future, and here is the opportunity for us, the mothers, perhaps among the last of the race who will be allowed the inestimable delight and joy of caring for our own little children, a delight and joy which society, sooner or later, will consider us unworthy on account of our inexpertness, our carelessness, our absorption in other things, our lack of wise preparation, our lack of abstract good judgment."

Do you feel that directional pull in our world where

women are told they have more value in the workplace than at home? Do we not see more institutionalized childcare at younger and younger ages as the new normal for society? We as guardians of the world's most important natural resource, the hearts of children, cannot let that happen. If we are inexpert, we will gain expertise. If we are careless, we will care more. If we are absorbed in other things, we will redirect our focus. If we have lacked in wise preparation, we will redouble our efforts, and in so doing will form good judgment. What we will not do is lose our right to the inestimable delight and joy of caring for our own little children. Because the world needs right now what only we can offer, and heaven needs us to carry out the plan in creating a world where there is no contention in the land because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people.

Women have been told by spiritual leaders you will play a crucial role in the grand times ahead. Your sisters, your daughters, your granddaughters, and the women you have nurtured will be at the heart of creating that society of people who will join in glorious association with the Savior. You have brought with you a spiritual capacity to nurture others and lift them higher towards love and purity. The marvelous potential lies within you, and you are being prepared for it. If the task seems too overwhelming, that also is by design—you cannot do it alone. If you live up to your privileges, the angels cannot be restrained from being your associates.

The idea of turning to mothers in the home to solve humanity's problems may seem too small and simple, but if the spread of a tiny virus can bring the entire world to its knees in a matter of months, couldn't an idea whose time has come have the same spread for good? The Lord has promised that He will cause righteousness to flood the earth. We have good reason to believe mothers play a crucial role in bringing this promise to pass. You have the spiritual power to change the world.

I see women beginning to awaken to their role with a fire in their belly. This movement doesn't require legislation or fanfare or public rallies or fundraisers or awareness campaigns. It is passing quietly, undetected by the world at large, from mother to mother in her neighborhood and through her network of friends and family.

I see a safety net being woven around the world in small and simple ways, as God's work always is. Our homes are being made places of refuge and safety. Let us see to it that the priceless efforts of childhood—priceless because they mean the development of inner power—are never ridiculed nor discouraged, nor set aside as worthless, but rather that they shall be encouraged.

God never meant that any human life should be a failure, and could we carry true mother love to all humanity, no life need be a failure. It is the work before us.

Speech Delivered at World Congress of Families IX

The banquet hall was filled to overflowing. Men and women from all walks of life were waiting with excitement for the arrival of their honored guests. Enthusiastic cheers were heard when the tall, fine-looking young man took his seat near the center of the guests' table. He was their newly-elected mayor—the youngest mayor they had ever had. The townsfolk had watched him grow up and they were so proud of him!

Minutes later, an old white-haired lady entered to more applause and was seated to the left of the mayor. She had been away for many years, but she was the one who had given them their college, their library and their playground.

Dinner was served, the tables cleared and then the mayor rose to speak. After reflecting a bit on growing up and the recent election, he said, "I believe that every man is master of his own fate. I believe in being a self-made man and while I am serving as your mayor, I will do all in my power to ensure every young person in this town is given every opportunity for a good education and a fine career. One can make of himself what he will if he has enough determination and courage. I am here to serve you all." And he returned to his seat amidst thunderous applause.

Not once during the address had the eyes of the little, white-haired lady been taken from the speaker. She seemed to be studying him rather than his address. She was so deep in thought, she almost missed her introduction as the next

speaker.

She made her way to the podium and began, "Years ago, in this very town, there lived a teacher of ten bright, happy girls. They played and worked together and loved each other dearly. Sadly, the teacher's husband became very ill and she had to move far away.

"It was hard for the teacher to leave. She had tried to help the girls the best she could, but she wasn't sure if she had done enough. The day came for her to leave and she invited the girls to spend one last evening with her in her home. She asked each girl to write a letter to her and share their dreams of what they hoped to be when they grew up. One by one, ten little heart-to-heart letters were laid on the table.

"Five days later as she was traveling, the teacher opened the letters and read them over and over to herself.

"Jennie wanted to be a great singer; she wanted to go to New York and study opera.

"Katherine wanted to be a kindergarten teacher.

"Mary wanted to be a lawyer—a criminal lawyer.

"Louise wanted to be a nurse.

"As she read, the teacher felt reassured and smiled at the thought of the influences for good these girls would be."

Then, turning to the mayor of the city, the little white-haired lady said, "Sir, I believe the contents of one of those letters will be of interest to you more than the rest. I was the teacher of those girls, so I can give you the exact wording of the last letter I read:

"'Dear friend,

"'You have asked us to give you our dearest wish. I have many wishes for the future, but the wish I want most of all is to be a fine and noble woman and some day to be the kind of mother you have told us so much about.'

"The girl who wrote that letter, sir, became your mother. Fourteen years before you were born, your character was being formed, your ideals were being molded, your future was being

safeguarded. I congratulate you, sir, on being elected to the office of mayor; but I congratulate you more for being the child of my little girl of the long ago who at sixteen could write, 'I want most of all to be a fine woman and some day to be a noble mother.' To her you owe much. Inspire the girls of the town if you plan for great men. A self-made man needs a noble mother to build the foundation of his character. There is no better way."

Then the speaker sat down and there was silence in the banquet hall.

Over a hundred years ago, Helen Hunt Jackson exclaimed: "Oh! If the world could only stop long enough for one generation of mothers to be alright, what a Millennium could be begun in thirty years!"

It is my dearest hope that we will see that generation of mothers, and so I would like to address my remarks to mothers of young children.

Everything man creates in this world is but an outward expression of what is treasured in his heart. As Luke, the physician, wrote, "A good man out of the good treasures of his heart bringeth forth that which is good."

You mothers are the guardians of the world's most important natural resource: the hearts of children. For far too long, you've been made to feel that the work done in your home is beneath you; that there are more productive ways to spend your time. That is a lie.

When a child's heart is the most open and impressionable, you are there. As you hold your newborn baby close to your heart, your skin is soft and warm. Your voice is sweet and melodic. The lullabies you quietly hum bring a sense of calm and order to the chaotic world your baby has suddenly entered. You provide the nourishment that satisfies the gnawing hunger in his belly. Cradled in your arms, your baby feels safe. Long before he understands words, long lasting impressions are being made deep in his heart that reassure him, "I matter.

I belong. I am loved." The bond between a mother and a child is strong and powerful.

It is because of your closeness to your child's heart that your influence and impact is so great. Your direct link to his heart is the reason why the hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the nations. If you don't like what you see going on in the world, the truth is, you are the one who can change it, for all true change must take place in individual hearts and, as Frederick Douglass wisely observed, "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." Your heart-work is vital to society and we need to rally around, protect, encourage and support you.

Your baby's heart develops before his brain within the womb, and his emotions develop before his intellect outside the womb. While minds are fed with facts, information and words, hearts are fed with impressions, feelings and images. Nature has reserved the first years of your child's life—particularly the first eight years—for making impressions on the heart. The wise mother will use those years to fill her child's heart with the good, the beautiful, and the true.

There has been a shift from heart to mind in childhood education over the last hundred years. This shift from heart to mind has not happened by accident or overnight. It has been by design and with steady effort. Some of the most influential men and women of the last century, especially those who influence education, have dreamed of a world governed by reason. Reason, they say, will give us solutions to all our problems. Reason, they think, can give us a new moral code that's more realistic and practical. And what reasonable person would ever think war is reasonable?

And so we see academics and skills to train minds introduced to our children at younger and younger ages while their hearts are being neglected. The experiment has gone on long enough to see results and the result is, our world has turned upside down. That which used to be good is now viewed as

bad, and that which was bad is now held up as good and desirable. It is a grave mistake to train the intellect of a child before we have tended to his heart.

Our world will only be brought back into balance when we place heart and mind in their proper order. This course correction won't require any governor's signature or committee to debate its merits. It will require no government funding. In fact, it doesn't require any funding at all. It's free to implement. And it can be implemented today.

More than 200 years ago, Swiss-educator, Pestalozzi wrote, "It is for a long time the business of the heart, before it is the business of reason… The eternal laws of nature lead me back to your hand, mother! Mother! I can keep my innocence, my love, my obedience, the excellences of my nobler nature with the new impressions of the world, all, all at your side only."

The shift from mind back to heart will be found in the music you play in your home, the art you hang on your walls, the poetry you recite by heart because you love it, and above all, the stories you tell. Music, pictures, poetry and story are the languages of the heart. The more you use these languages with your young children, the more they will comprehend.

The story is one of your most useful tools. Telling a story is how you can convert words into moving images that your child's heart will understand and to which it will attach feelings. Storytelling is an ageless and beautiful art that has been used for hundreds and thousands of years to convey values and traditions from generation to generation and from heart to heart. In those quiet hours when the lights are low and your children are in a calm, reflective mood, the stories you tell them will never be forgotten and they will influence them for the rest of their lives. And in the process, your hearts will be knit together in love.

And now, mothers, I will tell you why I think you are going to be able to do what no generation of mothers has been able to do before you. You live in the season of the harvest

and what a bounteous harvest it is! For 6000 years, mankind has been preserving its finest ideas and ideals in art, music and literature. And now, modern technology has delivered the ripened fruit right to your home where it will do the most good. The eyes of all those who sweat and suffered, sacrificed and labored are upon you. They have gifted you with all you need to raise the noblest, most refined, and wisest generation that has yet walked this earth.

Where much is given, much is required and what is required of you is to first, fill your own heart with good treasure from the harvest because what is in your heart will naturally flow into your child's heart. It is your love of all that is good and beautiful combined with your love for your child that will enable you to do what no one else can.

Then, you will need to re-learn the lost arts of heart education that have been brushed aside in our age of Reason. But there is good news. Just over a hundred years ago, there was a revival in the art of storytelling among mothers and teachers of young children. As part of that revival, warm-hearted educators—heart specialists—wrote careful instructions on how to educate children's hearts and then left us a treasure trove of stories to tell; stories that inspire the heart with possibilities and goodness; stories from nature, from history, from great lives, from fine art and music; fairy tales and tales of epic and legendary heroes; and stories of faith. Many of these writings have been buried in dusty corners of university libraries during this reign of the mind. But they've been brought back into the light for all of us to read and study, thanks to the digitizing efforts of such organizations as Internet Archives, Gutenberg and Google.

I have spent the last several years immersed in these writings and they have filled my life with joy and hope. I have gathered many of these stories into the Forgotten Classics Family Library and brought them back into print for a new generation to learn from.

Vincent Van Gogh said, "It is good to love many things, for therein lies the true strength, and whosoever loves much performs much, and can accomplish much, and what is done in love is done well."

To help a child love much is the divine charge given to mothers and divine gifts are given her to accomplish the task.

This is the day of the harvest. It is a day to thrust in your sickle and reap with diligence because you know what follows Fall's harvest. Already you may be seeing signs of approaching winter. The leaves are changing color and starting to drop off the trees. There's a bit of a chill in the air. But you don't have to be afraid. Within the harvest are lessons on how to survive harsh winters. And if you've been wise, you will have stored enough to sustain yourself through cold winter months when nothing grows. Winter can be a time to rest from heavy labors, to wrap up in a warm blanket, sit in front of a fire and reflect on things that really matter. Even on the coldest day of winter is found great beauty. Some of the greatest masterpieces of literature, art and music have come from history's winters.

And if the winter's day seems especially long and dark and dreary, you can hold on to the hope and promise of spring, because spring always follows winter. Always. It will be a time of new beginnings; of clearing away rotting leaves and digging new furrows in the earth to plant the seeds saved from the fruits of fall's harvest. And there will be fresh scented breezes.

I realize the number of harvesters may be small, but I've baked enough bread to know a little bit of leaven raises the whole loaf. Mothers, will you be that leaven?

By small and simple means, you can bring great things to pass. Remember this story with which I will close:

A certain man had a friend who was a beekeeper. Upon visiting him one day, he found his friend in great despair. "I'm ruined," he cried. "All my honey is bitter." The man carefully and thoughtfully considered the situation and then suggested they rise early in the morning and try to follow the swarm of

bees to see what they were feeding on, which they did. They found them at an old abandoned bottling factory where, out back, there were barrels of rotting, gooey, icky syrups from which the bees were filling their little pollen sacs and flying back to the hives. The man offered, "Change what your bees are feeding on, and you'll change the quality of your honey."

Mothers, as you pay attention to the quality of stories your children are feeding on, you will not only improve the quality of their lives, you will improve the quality of the world. Stories can heal our hearts. Stories can heal our homes. Don't underestimate the power of mother and a story.

The Richest Gift

(Adapted from *Little Blessed Eyes* by Elizabeth Harrison)

Long ago, and far, far away, when fairies could be seen by mortals, a sweet baby boy came to live in a humble home. As his mother cradled the newborn in her arms, and wondered what kind of man he would become, she softly whispered, "How I wish that I could give to you, my darling child, the richest gift on earth, so that Kings and Emperors might be proud to call you their companion."

"So you can," said a gentle voice beside her that startled the mother. "I can give him the greatest and most wonderful gift on earth." The mother looked around the room and her eyes fell upon a perfectly beautiful little creature, no bigger than your thumb, with two wings as thin as gauze gleaming with every color of the rainbow. Upon its head was a slender gold crown and its small face was bright with a merry smile.

"What will you do for my child?" cried the mother. "Will you give him comfort and ease and fill his days with endless pleasure?"

"Ah, no," replied the fairy, "I will give him something far better than pleasant food and a soft bed and fine clothes."

"Then will you make him great and powerful so that men may bow down before him and honor him?"

"No! No!" again replied the fairy shaking her head. "I will give him something of far more worth than fame and power!"

"Then you will make him rich, so rich that he will never have a financial worry or care; so rich that he never has to work?"

"Nay, good woman," said the fairy seriously. "These are

foolish things for which you ask. My gift is greater than all of those put together. Pleasure and influence and wealth a man may earn for himself—and he may be very miserable after he gets them, too," she added with a shrug of her shoulders. "The gift that I would bestow upon your son will make him the happiest of mortals and will give him the power of making many, many others happy."

"Tell me," cried the mother, "how will you make him so happy? No human being is ever sure of happiness."

The fairy replied, "Let me kiss him upon his two eyelids as he lies there asleep and do you the same each returning birthday and all will be well."

A step was heard approaching the door. "Quick! Quick! exclaimed the fairy, "I must be off before the door opens. Shall I give him the magic kiss or not?"

"Yes," cried the excited mother. "I trust you will do no harm to my precious child."

Instantly the fairy fluttered down and, as she kissed each closed eyelid, gently whispered, "He shall be called 'Blessed Eyes.'"

The door opened and the fairy was gone.

Most of the mother's friends and relatives thought Blessed Eyes was a very strange name to give a child, but as the boy grew into a sweet and healthy childhood, loving and kind to everyone, little Blessed-Eyes became a favorite.

Long before her child could talk, the mother noticed how closely he observed everything around him. He saw the first red glow of the evening sunset. His eyes were the first to spy out the early spring flower, and in the autumn when the wind was sharp and cold, he would bring home some red mountain berries or a withered leaf wrapped around a little caterpillar. No stone nor cloud nor stream nor tree but gave him pleasure.

"Ah," thought the mother, "this is the birthday gift. She has made his eyes to see the beautiful everywhere."

But then she heard these words whispered gently in her

ear: "More than that, far more than that! Kings and princes shall yet call him great." She seemed to hear the soft but distant singing of the words,

> Love well, love well, love well,
> That the heart within may swell.

Years passed by, changing little Blessed Eyes into a tall young man, and each succeeding year added to the wonderful power which his eyes possessed, of seeing the best that was in everything and everybody. He was the friend of rich and poor. All sought his companionship, for he was constantly pointing out to them so many beautiful things in the world about them which they would never have seen but for him. All loved him dearly, for he was just as constantly finding the best that their inner world contained, and encouraging them to live according to their noblest ideals of how true men and women should live.

Long years passed and Blessed-Eyes became the King's Chief Counsellor. One day as he was walking through the streets, he heard a deep sigh of someone in great trouble. He turned to see a poor laboring man with his head bent forward upon his hands.

"What is the matter?"

"Ah," replied the poor man, "All the jobs in the shops are taken and I can find no work; my children are starving for want of bread."

"What large, strong arms you have!" said Blessed Eyes. "Why do you not seek the King and offer to quarry the beautiful white marble that lies in yonder mountain range? Those great strong arms of yours could do a grand work in the King's quarry."

The man softened, "I will go."

The King gladly accepted the offer and sent him with crow-bars and drills and soon there came a wagon load of beautiful white marble, and then another and then another.

The King was so pleased, he sent another ten men and then twenty and then a hundred and soon a vast pile of the glistening, white marble had been collected, and the poor and discouraged man had become the most famous stonemason in the world.

Not long after this, as Blessed-Eyes and the King looked at the shining white marble and wondered how it could be used to make beautiful the city, they noticed a man standing beside it, measuring it with his eye.

"It's a fine sight, is it not?" commented Blessed-Eyes.

But the poor man looked at him sadly, shook his head and wrote, "I cannot hear a word that you say; I am totally deaf, and therefore I am the loneliest man in all the King's realm."

Blessed Eyes heart was stirred with pity for the lonely man. He took his pencil and wrote, "You evidently have a very correct eye for measurements."

"Yes," replied the man, "I think I could estimate the weight of any one of these great stones within half an ounce."

Blessed Eyes wrote quickly: "With such good eyes for measurement, you would surely be a good builder. This is the King. Why do you not offer to make for him some beautiful buildings out of this white marble?"

The lonely man's face brightened. The King accepted his offer and the new architect set to work at once drawing plans for several buildings which were to surround a charming lake in the King's park.

Soon, scores of men were laying foundations, while others shaped the marble into blocks and pillars, all under the direction of the new architect. When all was done and the buildings stood in their full majestic beauty with their long colonnades shining in the sunlight and their graceful towers rising airily in the upper air and their beautiful gilded domes crowning all, the scene resembled fairyland. People came from the farthest ends of the earth to enjoy its beauty and the sad and lonely deaf man had now become the most famous architect

in the whole world.

As beautiful as the buildings were on the outside, inside they were cold and bare and one day as the King and Blessed Eyes consulted how the inner walls might be made as beautiful as the outer ones, they heard a group of boys making fun of a stranger in their midst. With a feeling of indignation, Blessed Eyes pressed forward: "What is your difficulty, sir?"

The stranger blushed and stammered, "I I I ca-ca-canno-no-not sp-speak your language wi-without st-st-stammering."

At this the boys roared with laughter. Blessed Eyes turned an angry look at them, and slipping his arm through the stranger's, he said, "Will you walk with me? I noticed you have strong, artistic hands. Surely you must be able to draw and paint."

The stranger's face lit up—he had hoped to get work there as an artist.

He was taken to the King, and soon the three were deep in plans for decorating and making beautiful the inner walls of the white buildings. It was not long before the stammering artist had proved that he was not only an artist, but a master artist. Lesser artists and new pupils flocked to him from all parts of the land. In less than a year, the walls were decorated with wonderful pictures of faraway landscapes; of beautiful sunset clouds, and best of all, true and lifelike portraits of the noblest men and women of the nation and the stammering stranger had become known as the greatest artist of the age.

Now the next question that arose was the best way to use these magnificent buildings, so that all might enjoy them. One day, as Blessed Eyes pondered the matter, he came upon a man, pacing the halls with his hands clasped behind him. He soon noticed the man was completely blind.

"Ah! That is the step of Blessed-Eyes! Much as he has done to help others, there is nothing he can do for me!"

"Indeed," replied Blessed Eyes. "If you can tell a man by his step, you must certainly have good hearing. Surely a man

whose hearing is so acute must be a good musician."

"Yes," the man cried impatiently, "I am the finest conductor of an orchestra in the whole world, but for what use? Nobody cares for good music now!" And he shrugged his shoulders.

"Come with me to the King. I think he has need of you."

After a long talk with the King, the King offered his generous support that the people might learn to love good music. The blind man became such a marvelous director of musicians that soon, thousands upon thousands came to hear the afternoon concerts which were given in the largest of the beautiful, white buildings.

One bright, spring morning, as Blessed Eyes started out to enjoy the sunshine and flowers, his eyes fell upon the tear-stained face of a woman. "Dear Madam, is there anything I can do for you?"

"Alas, what can you do for a broken-hearted mother whose four little children have been taken by death from her arms. Unless I have children to love, life has no brightness for me."

"Surely," said Blessed-Eyes softly and compassionately, "there are yet many children who need your love. Will you not come with me to the palace of the King?"

The woman looked perplexed but followed. I do not know just how it happened, but soon there were voices of happy children who followed her as she told them stories and taught them songs and led them in charming games and trained their hands into skillful work. So full of motherly love was the woman's work that other beautiful and noble women came and joined her until at last there was no child in the whole city who had not learned how to love sweet music, enjoy beautiful pictures and how to be kind and thoughtful towards others.

In time many of these children grew into manhood and womanhood and became musicians, artists, authors, physi-

cians, clergyman and wonderfully skilled workmen of all sorts. Many of the women married and became loving and wise mothers because of the training they had received from the pale-faced childless woman who was now filled with joy.

At last the good King died, and the question arose, "Who shall be our King?" The counsellors sent to the stonemasons and the great stonemason cried, "Let Blessed Eyes be our King! Did he not teach me how to use my strong arms? Has he not furnished bread for us and our families?"

And the architects said, "Let Blessed Eyes be King! Have we not, from him, learned to make beautiful whatever we build?"

And they sent to the mills and the factories and the designers said, "Why not make Blessed-Eyes our King? It was he who first introduced Art to our land and showed us how to make as beautiful as pictures our carpets and curtains and walls."

Then they sent to all the colleges and schools of the land and the superintendents said, "We know of no better man than Blessed-Eyes. He first taught us that a love of the beautiful should be part of each child's education."

Soon the whole nation seemed to cry out, "Blessed-Eyes, Blessed-Eyes, Long live King Blessed-Eyes! There is none among us whom he has not helped." When the news was brought to Blessed-Eyes, he smiled gently and said, "I had hoped to rest now, but if I can serve my country, I must do it."

So he was made King and the nation became wise and great and powerful under his reign. For the little children grew up learning to love the beautiful and to see it everywhere until at last there was a whole nation of blessed-eyes, and every city in the land became as beautiful as the White City by the Lake.

NOTE

In the online Catch the Vision course in Section One, you will find a video of an address given by Dr. Gordon Neufeld entitled, "Why Adults Need to Matter More than Peers." This single presentation has been a game changer for many members of our Well-Educated Heart community. It is highly recommended that you take the time to watch it.

He teaches, "You cannot parent a child whose heart you do not have," and that the young look for something to attach to. Once it attaches, it grows to be like that to which it is attached.

These are vital concepts in the education of hearts.

You may also want to check out his book, *Hold on to Your Kids*.

It is also highly recommended that you watch the video by Sir Ken Robinson in Section Two entitled, "Educating the Heart and the Mind."



Section Two:

A Change of Heart

What is different about a
Well-Educated Heart?



FREEDOM TO DISCOVER IS ESSENTIAL FOR GROWTH AND JOY

The problem facing us is that we have become a very academic-oriented culture where we measure, test, and compare. It takes courage to trust this process of root building that can't be seen—especially when your neighbor or family members have children who are reading and writing and doing math at a level your child is not because you have been placing your focus on internal matters. It's always hard to go against the norm.

You are a Pioneer blazing new trails.

The Difference Between Mind and Heart

Before we go any further, I want you to understand what I mean when I differentiate between mind and heart. Let me try and illustrate.

Imagine you're walking down the street and you notice a man walking on the other side of the street. After a few moments, a second man come up from behind and taps the first man on the shoulder. The first man turns around and after a brief interchange, he reaches into his pocket, pulls out his wallet and hands the second man a hundred dollar bill. The two men then walk away in different directions.

What is the fact of what you just saw? You saw a hundred dollars transfer ownership from the first man to the second. Is that all you need to know?

Let's try again and this time I'm going to add the story so your heart can understand what your mind just saw. What if I told you the second man was a robber? When the first man turned around, he said, "I've got a gun in my pocket, hand over all your money or else."

Or let's try this. What if I said the two men were old friends? The second man was down on his luck and had previously phoned his friend and asked if he could borrow a hundred dollars and they had agreed to meet there.

Or what if it was the other way around? What if the first man had been the one to borrow the hundred dollars and he had asked his friend to meet him so that he could pay him back?

Let's go back to the first robber scenario. What if I told

you the first man was a multimillionaire? No. Let's say he had been unemployed for several months…no, let's say several years. He has just been to the bank and withdrawn his last hundred dollars. He has a little girl at home and she's sick. In fact, the doctor told him if he didn't get medicine for her right away, she was going to die. He was on his way to get that medicine and now his money was gone.

Isn't it interesting—that same hundred-dollar bill yielded greed, joy, sorrow, anguish, gratitude, love, despair and annoyance; all things that only the heart can understand. The fact that it was a hundred-dollar bill really was the least important piece of information of all. It gave a point of reference, but that was about it. And notice—if I were to ask you to tell me in words what greed or joy or anguish feels like, could you?

Our eyes saw the fact. Our hearts grasped the truth.

The heart understands things that cannot always be expressed in words or directly taught. But still, it knows. And as the fox in *The Little Prince* so rightly observed, "It is only with the heart that we can see rightly. What is essential is invisible to the eye."

Or, if you remember Virginia's letter to the Chicago Sun asking if there really was a Santa Claus, in part, the answer was: "The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see."

Which causes more pain? A broken leg or a broken heart? It is this realm of the heart that separates humans from machines and it's all these feelings that make life worth living.

Some 'Heart' Wisdom from the Tin Man and the Scarecrow in the Wizard of Oz

TM: Why didn't you walk around that hole?

SC: I don't know enough. My head is stuffed with straw, you know, and that is why I am going to Oz to ask him for some brains.

TM: Oh, I see. But after all, brains are not the best things in the world.

SC: Have you any?

TM: No, my head is quite empty, but I once had brains and a heart also; so having tried them both, I should much rather have a heart.

SC: And why is that?

TM: I will tell you a story, and then you will know.

He then goes on to tell the story and ends with:

Brains do not make one happy, and happiness is the best thing in the world.

New Common Core Standards

Sandcastles, Diamonds and Singing Songs of Joy

I grew up close to the sunny, sandy beaches of Southern California so I got to build lots of sandcastles, which I loved to do. I had to build them close to the water because the water made the sand stick together. But that meant that when the first big wave of the high tide came in, my sandcastle always washed away. Not one of them is still standing.

Sandcastles come to mind when I think about what I remember learning in school. I can only recall a handful of state capitals. The moles I couldn't wrap my mind around in High School Chemistry have returned to being the furry little blind creatures to which I can relate. Although I scored in the 99.9th percentile in a national High School math competition, I can no longer plot *x* or *y* on anything. I wouldn't recognize the quadratic equation in a line-up nor can I tell you what it's used for. I remember missing the meiosis-mitosis question on my tenth grade biology exam. I never could keep them straight. But in the 40+ years since then, the question has not come up again even one time. When I think of the college exams I stayed up all night studying for, if I had to retake them today, I doubt I'd pass any of them.

Some studies estimate the average person loses 90% of the information they learn in school. I've done my own informal 'research' poll among family and friends and found a similar response unless it was a subject they loved or continued to use in their lives, or they had one of those rare photographic memories.

Is there anything I remember from school? Actually, yes.

I remember my eighth grade graduation dance because I had a huge crush on Dan Reed. He was late to math one day because he was out shooting a TV commercial. That's how cool he was. I, on the other hand, was a geek. I stood at least a head taller than every other girl in my class. I had glasses and braces and as if that wasn't awkward enough, my mother had hand-sewn me a pale pink graduation dress to wear to the dance. In a day of mini-skirts, she wanted me to be modest. The white lace scallops at the bottom of the dress fell very modestly below my knees.

So there I was at the dance, hugging the walls, watching everyone out on the dance floor. Especially Dan Reed. And then it happened. He was looking in my direction. I checked around to see who he might be looking at, but it was just me standing there. Then he started walking towards me. My heart started racing as he held out his hand, looked me in the eyes, and smiling, asked, "Marlene, would you like to dance?" Of course I was too terrified to actually dance with him and I made up some lame excuse, but inside my heart I was dancing on clouds. The whole detailed event plays through my memory as clearly as if it had happened yesterday.

Overall, the things I remember from school so many years ago are the feelings, the disappointments, the embarrassments and the impressions that went into my heart, not what went into my mind. I earned straight A's in school so I must have had all the "necessary" information in my mind at one time, but so much of it has washed away, just like my sandcastles.

My school days were filled with information. The fact that I cannot tell you the difference between meiosis and mitosis is of no consequence to the world.

Today is different. Today the buzz words are "high-order" and "critical thinking skills." We administer SAT Reasoning tests to our students so they can demonstrate their proficiency in rejecting all beliefs that cannot be backed by hard evidence. We train kindergartners to rely on that which can be

seen, touched and measured. Emotional thinking is frowned upon.

Scientific reasoning reigns supreme.

Which is why we are living in dangerous times.

Hans Christian Andersen wrote a little story 150 years ago warning us of the very danger we are facing. Disney's *Frozen* is based on this story, but if you've read Hans Christian Andersen's *The Snow Queen*, you know the movie is much different and they left an important part of the story out altogether. So I think it's worth taking a few minutes to revisit the story as Hans Christian Andersen told it.

Long, long ago there lived a hobgoblin—a demon, really—who one day made a mirror that had a particular power. Everything that was good or beautiful that was reflected in it was made to look small and ugly while everything that was bad or ugly was magnified, and every little fault could be plainly seen.

The scholars in his demon school carried the mirror all over the world until there wasn't a land or a people who had not been looked at in this distorted mirror. They thought it would look even funnier if they could carry it high up into the heavens to look at the angels in it, but the higher they rose, the more slippery the mirror became until it slipped from their fingers and crashed to the earth, shattering into millions of pieces.

Now the mirror caused even more unhappiness for if a speck no larger than a grain of sand lodged in a person's eye, it had the property of the whole mirror and they viewed everything the wrong way. They could neither see rightly nor justly. And even worse, if a tiny shard entered the heart, the heart grew as cold as ice. The pieces soon covered the whole earth.

The demon laughed so hard at the mischief he had caused that he nearly split his sides.

Now, in a large town lived two poor little children who loved each other dearly. Kay and Gerda often played under

the red rose bush that grew near their homes. One day, just as the clock struck twelve, Kay said, "Oh! Something has struck my heart. And it feels like there's something in my eye." When Gerda asked what was wrong and started to cry, Kay mockingly told her to stop crying because she looked so ugly when she cried. There was nothing wrong with him. "But look!" he said. "Look at the worm on that rose and why is that rose crooked? And what an ugly little box they grow in." He kicked the box and ripped off the two roses as he ran off to play with the boys.

By and by he began to make fun of the townspeople and the people laughed and thought he was very clever. He now thought the picture books and stories his grandmother told were very stupid.

One day as he was playing on his sleigh, a large white sleigh carrying a white figure wrapped in white fur circled the field. Kay was intrigued, grabbed hold of the back of the sleigh and off they flew. Faster and faster they went. He tried to let go, but he couldn't. He was afraid and tried to pray, but all he could remember were his multiplication tables. At long last, the sleigh stopped and the driver stood up. She was tall and beautiful—a Snow Queen. She opened her warm fur coat for Kay to snuggle in. "Are you still cold?" she asked as she kissed his forehead. Although his heart was now almost a lump of ice, he somehow no longer felt cold or afraid.

He thought the face of the Snow Queen was the most beautiful he had ever seen. He could imagine nothing more perfect. He proudly told her he could do arithmetic as far as fractions in his head and that he knew the number of square miles and number of inhabitants in the country and the Snow Queen smiled. Off they flew again, over woods and lakes, over sea and land. And Kay felt perfectly safe.

Meanwhile, little Gerda didn't believe what the townspeople said—that Kay must have drowned in the river. She set off to search for him and after a hard and difficult journey,

arrived at the magnificent ice palace of the Snow Queen. There were hundreds of empty, vast and cold rooms in the palace, all made of drifted snow. The largest hall stretched for several miles. In the midst of this empty, endless hall of snow was a frozen lake and there, in the center of it, stood the Snow Queen. She called the lake "The Mirror of Reason" and said it was the best, and indeed the only one, in the world.

When Gerda finally found little Kay, he was quite blue with cold—almost black. But he didn't feel it, for the Snow Queen had kissed away his icy shiverings. There he was, dragging sharp, flat pieces of ice to and fro, trying to get them to fit together in different ways. It was the icy game of reason he was playing, and in his eyes, the figures he created were very remarkable and of the highest importance. Yet, try though he may, he could not create the one figure he desperately wanted to make. He was trying to form the word, "Eternity," for the Snow Queen had told him, "When you find out this, you shall be your own master, and I will give you the whole world and a new pair of skates."

Gerda ran to Kay and threw her arms around his neck. "Kay, dear little Kay! I've found you at last!" But he sat quite still, stiff and cold. Then Gerda wept hot tears that penetrated his heart and began to melt the lump of ice until Kay also burst into tears, washing away the speck that had lodged in his eye. "Gerda, where have you been and where am I?" As he looked all around him, he exclaimed, "How cold it is, and how large and empty it all looks." The two danced, crying tears of joy, until they fell to the ground, wrapped in each other's arms. And as they lay there, their figure formed—at last—the word "Eternity" and Kay was forever free from the Snow Queen's power.

The two made their way back to their red rose bush where they both sat, grown up, yet children at heart—and it was summer, warm, beautiful summer.

I see evidence of the Snow Queen's influence all around

us. That which is good and wholesome is made to look small and insignificant, even ridiculed, while the bad and the ugly are magnified. That which used to be good is now called evil and that which was evil is now called good. The biographies written 100 years ago inspired hearts. Today, we've knocked all our old heroes off their pedestals and their modern biographers focus on their flaws and weaknesses.

The comments in comment sections are mean-spirited and cruel. Intellectuals mock feelings and demand scientific studies and factual evidence as the only grounds for discussion. If an idea cannot be measured or tested, it is rejected. Emotion is scorned.

I often pick up old children's books at book sales and then go online to read what other people have said about the books. I find comments like these:

"This book changed my life."

"I've read it so many times, my copy is falling apart."

"The pages of my book are covered with tears."

"I read the book 60 years ago and I just reread it. I love it even more today than I did then."

These comments are made by an older pre-Snow Queen generation. Then I read comments made about the same book by young readers today:

"This is the most boring book I've ever read."

"I hated this book. No one should ever have to read it."

"It moved so slowly, I wanted to die."

"I hated all those feelings."

This shift from heart to mind hasn't happened by accident or overnight. It's been by design and with steady effort. Many of the most influential men and women of the last century, particularly those who influence education, have dreamed of a world governed by reason. Reason, they say, will give us solutions to all our problems. Reason can give us a new moral code that's more realistic and practical. And what reasonable person would ever think war is reasonable? Their philosophy

can be summed up with these words found in *A Humanist Manifesto*: "Reason and intelligence are the most effective instruments that humankind possesses. There is no substitute."

Those sound like Snow Queen words, don't they?

The experiment has gone on long enough to see the results and the result is, the world has turned upside down.

It's a grave mistake to train the intellect of a child before we have tended to his heart. Much of the frustration of young kids in school comes from forcing them to engage in academic activities for which they are not developmentally ready. We ignore the fact that childhood years have been reserved by our Creator for warming their hearts. Children can feel before they can reason.

But we've tasted the fruits of science and technology and they taste really good. We can hardly wait to see science's next big reveal or technology's latest gadget. And there's nothing wrong with that. It's all very exciting. We do want children to develop scientific reasoning and critical thinking skills. We want scientists and engineers. But it needs to happen in its proper order: heart first and then mind.

And the reason for that is clear.

Science and technology in the hands of evil or foolish hearts can and will destroy us. Only when it is in the hands of good and wise hearts will it bless us.

Science is a wonderful servant but a dangerous master.

By abandoning making long-lasting impressions on the heart in favor of facts and information in childhood years, we've created a massive educational system of sandcastles. But it's not only our learning we're having a hard time holding onto. Everything around us is getting slipperier. We're having a hard time holding on to our jobs, our homes, our money, our relationships, our faith—even our freedom. I blame the Snow Queen's hold on us. Only by paying proper attention to "heart" can we bring our world back into balance.

For the amount of time, money and worry that go into

educating our kids, I'm not satisfied with sandcastles, as fun as they are to build. I want diamonds. Diamonds are one of the few things in our world that don't decay or fall apart over time. If I find a diamond that was buried in a treasure chest 1000 years ago, it will still sparkle today just as brightly as the day it was buried. Diamonds are forever.

I want a "forever" system of education.

I want learning that will last.

Which is why I am a big proponent of common core standards. I think that not only all 50 of our states should adopt common core standards, I believe the whole world will benefit from them. But the common core standards I have in mind are not the ones being implemented in our schools because I have a different objective in mind. Our schools hope to make our children college and career ready. They want to prepare global workers for the global economy. I think our kids deserve much more than that. We can't go wrong when we align our will to God's, and His will is: "Man is that he might have joy." So my objective is to prepare children to live lives of maximum everlasting joy, in which a job will certainly be part of the journey, but will not be the ultimate destination.

My proposed common core standards won't require any governor's signature or committee to debate them. They need no federal funding. In fact, they don't need any funding at all. They're free to implement. And they can be implemented starting today, in your home and in mine.

These common core standards provide the antidote to the Snow Queen's poison.

I have them from High Authority.

The government site for the current standards says they can explain theirs in 3 minutes. I can express mine in just 3 words:

1: Faith 2: Hope and 3: Charity

Let me show you what they look like.

FAITH

Faith is the first thing to go in a Snow Queen's reign because she demands full trust in only those things that can be seen, tested and measured. Faith, on the other hand, requires us to trust in a higher force or power that usually can't be seen and often asks us to suspend reason. Reason would have had the children of Israel surrender to Pharaoh's army. What possible chance did they have? Only faith would have thought of parting the Red Sea so they could cross safely on dry ground.

The world seeks Truth by Reason. God teaches, "There is a Spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." And He reveals that understanding of truth with a feeling, a burning in our hearts. We feel when something is right. In our day, we see men ever learning but never coming to a knowledge of the Truth.

Truth, Light, Spirit, and Living Water are all words that are used interchangeably in the scriptures to describe what I call spiritual sunshine and we all know what would happen to us if the sun stopped shining. It requires faith to believe in its existence. It can't be studied under a microscope, but you know when it's present because in its rays is felt love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness and meekness. It infuses joy into our souls and becomes part of us which is what differentiates it from mere pleasure. Pleasure is usually temporal and temporary. The pleasure of eating a chocolate chip cookie lasts only as long as the cookie. Spiritual light, on the other hand, is satisfying and everlasting.

All light can be traced back to its source and I know of only One who has claimed to be the source of this Light I am describing. The good news is He freely shines His light on everyone—the believer and the unbeliever. What varies from person to person is the capacity to capture this light. The greater the capacity, the greater the joy. The value of a diamond is also determined by its capacity to capture light. Some

diamonds sparkle more than others.

Spiritual sunshine quickens feelings; it animates us and makes us feel alive. It opens up our understanding. To be "inspired" literally means to take in breath or to take "in spirit." Brahms relied upon inspiration to compose his music. He described the process this way:

> I will now tell you…about my method of communicating with the Infinite, for all truly inspired ideas come from God. Beethoven, who was my ideal, was well aware of this. When I feel the urge, I begin by appealing directly to my Maker…. Straightway the ideas flow in upon me, directly from God, and not only do I see distinct themes in my mind's eye, but they are clothed in the right forms, harmonies and orchestrations.

He went on to say it was the same power by which all the great composers like Mozart, Schubert, Bach and Beethoven drew their inspirations.

Is the day of greatness behind us? I like the hopeful words of Orson Whitney who said, "We will yet have Miltons and Shakespeares of our own. God's ammunition is not exhausted. His brightest spirits are held in reserve for the latter times." But I can't see it happening until we undo the damage of the Snow Queen and re-open the channels of inspiration to our children.

Which brings me to my Common Core Standard for Faith: Prepare the child's heart to be inspired.

Goethe was asked how he kept spiritual light flowing inward. His response was that everyday, he gazed upon a masterpiece of fine art, read a piece of fine literature, recited a selection of poetry and listened to beautiful music—exactly the things the Snow Queen is eliminating from our classrooms. She may argue with me that they're there, but what is remaining of the Arts is to be looked upon and analyzed with intellectual eyes, not felt by the heart. She doesn't trust the heart.

By filling the hearts of our children with beautiful images of art, literature, and poetry, we are giving the Spirit something to light up. If I go out on a dark summer night with a flashlight and shine the beam straight up in the air, I won't see the light unless it reflects off dust particles in the air or maybe an occasional moth. To really see the light, I need to shine it on the leaves of the trees or the ground ahead of me. We can increase the light within our souls and the souls of our children by giving the Spirit a large surface area to light up. By following the admonition of Paul and treasuring up in our hearts those things which are virtuous and lovely and of good report and praiseworthy, we provide lots of surface area for the Spirit to light up. Light cleaves to light. And in that Light will be felt great joy.

When we block spiritual sunshine, the same thing happens to our world as happens to a flower bed that is covered with a sun-blocking tarp: everything underneath it begins to rot and decay.

If we wish to prepare our children's hearts to be inspired, we need to give the Spirit room to do its work. Several months ago, I was looking for Christmas stories to include in our Christmas volume. When I finished reading one of the selections, I was so overcome with emotion, I buried my face in my hands at my desk and wept. The emotions I felt made me want to be kinder; to be better. They lifted me up. I felt my heart enlarging. The book itself was not a literary masterpiece. It was sentimental and predictable—no action scenes or compelling conflict to resolve. There were even hints of political incorrectness. Despite all these things, I felt my soul being filled.

Had I read the book in school, I'm sure I would have been asked to pinpoint character, plot and setting. I may have been asked to search for and circle use of literary devices such as alliteration or compare and contrast two of the characters. I might have been required to identify and analyze what words

the writer used to evoke emotion. I'm sure I would have been given a list of questions to answer about the text. And in the process, it would have killed the Spirit of the story.

The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

When heart work is going on, often silence is the best teaching method. The deeper a message travels into the heart, the fewer words there are to describe the feeling. The ocean at its greatest depth is silent. The Spirit communicates with the "deeps" of our souls.

Allowing room for the Spirit to work is a big part of applying the Common Core Standard of Faith: Preparing our children's hearts to be inspired. As we make room for the Spirit to work, we'll keep spiritual sunshine flowing in our world.

HOPE

Hope has been the second casualty of the Snow Queen's reign. Hope is an expectation or desire for something better and is what keeps us moving forward. Hope is dependent on vision. "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Nothing has ever been created or accomplished that didn't first exist as an image or as a vision in someone's heart.

In the excitement of filling our children's mind with facts and information, stories have been left behind. Yet, it's the stories that give vision to our hearts. They illustrate life. They set dreams in motion. Our children need to clearly see all the possibilities of life. And for the most joyful life, they need to see what "good" looks like. The Snow Queen may argue that being "pure" is old-fashioned and unreasonable, but it's the diamond of greatest purity that is the most prized. The flawless diamond is virtually incorruptible.

The world's vision for our youth is not the Lord's vision. I am not alone in the belief that His long awaited kingdom is about to be established here upon the earth. This is not the day for building sandcastles. This is a day for diamonds.

Most diamonds are formed under prolonged periods of high heat and intense pressure, a process that can be repeated to make the diamond harder. Diamond souls fit for the Kingdom of God will be formed in the same way.

One night I was saying my usual prayer: "Please watch over my children. Keep them safe from all harm or accident. Bless them with health and strength and with every good desire." But this particular night, my prayer was gently interrupted with these words that formed in my mind:

"Marlene, are you asking Me to keep them from the very means that have brought you to know Me?" I knew it was true. It wasn't the times when everything was going right that I felt His power. It was those times when I was backed to the wall with nowhere to go—the times when Reason offered no solution—that I experienced His miracles and felt His healing spirit pour into my soul. Yet, it didn't seem right to pray that horrible things would happen to my children. So I said, "Then I'm not sure what to pray for." Immediately, the sweet feeling came, "Pray for more trust in Me." That's a much harder prayer to pray, but I'm trying.

What we can do to keep hope alive in the hearts of our children through the troubling but necessary diamond forming stretches ahead is to make sure we have filled their reservoir of stories with examples of others who have struggled through challenges and overcome difficulties. We need to give them a vision of the world as it can be to look forward to. And especially, we need to show them what faith in God looks like. They need to know God always keeps His promises and that nothing is impossible to Him. It's the diamond souls with clear vision who will stand strong when everything around them is falling apart. They will inspire hope in those whose hearts are weak.

By giving our children a vision of good things to hope for —the second Common Core standard—we will ensure there will be diamond souls who can withstand the heat and lift

those around them to higher ground in the days ahead. Their hearts will not fail them.

CHARITY

Charity is the pure love of Christ and this Love is the superglue of the universe. Take love out of a marriage, and the marriage falls apart. Take love out of a family, and the family breaks up. Take away love of one's country—patriotism—and the nation starts to crumble. Take away love of God, and faith vanishes. Take love out of learning, and the learning doesn't stick.

This pure love is a gift of spiritual sunshine. As the Snow Queen blocks access to that Light, love grows colder. But by following Common Core Standard One, our children's hearts will be inspired, and in the light of that Spirit, the hearts of our children will be filled with pure love. It's not enough to just capture that love, though. The love needs to be put to use and reflected outwards. Likewise, the value of a diamond is not just in its capacity to capture light; it's also in its capacity to reflect that light.

In Robert Browning's *Paracelsus*, Festus and Paracelsus are lifelong friends. Paracelsus longs for the life of the scholar. He can imagine no greater happiness than uninterrupted time with his books, digging out the deep meaning of the truth of the ages. Surely, this will be his great gift to mankind—to share his vast knowledge and understanding.

The two friends meet twenty years later. Paracelsus is a wreck; he's miserable and he's dying. But he has learned a priceless lesson—though too late for himself—as he now understands: "There is an answer to the passionate longings of the heart for fulness, and I knew it. And the answer is this: Live in all things outside yourself by love and you will have joy. This is the life of God; it ought to be our life."

There is a right use and a wrong use for all things. If you tweak the word "righteousness" just a little, you have "right-

use-ness." The right use yields joy. The wrong use yields sorrow. This standard of right-use-ness can be applied to business, money, education, art, music, the internet, sex—everything in our world—great blessings in their right-use and great sorrow in their mis-use.

Common Core Standard 3 is: Teach the right-use of all things in love. It's a formula for long-lasting joy. In the world's economy, the richest man is the one with the most money. In heaven's economy, the richest man is the one with the greatest capacity for joy. As love increases, joy increases.

If we wish our children to be heavenly rich, we will need to give them a clear vision of what love looks like: "Love suffereth long, and is kind. Love envieth not; vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, does not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in truth."

Ten years ago, the American Psychiatric Association revealed a study where they estimated the average 18-year-old in the United States will have viewed over 16,000 violent deaths and over 200,000 acts of violence. How many acts of love will we have given them to view in those same formative years?

How important is this love? Let me put it this way.

One day I asked my husband to go to the store and buy me some broccoli for a casserole I was making. When he came home, he had several bags of groceries on his arms. There was milk and bread and butter, cookies, chips and cereal. Although everything he brought home was good, the one thing I needed wasn't there: the broccoli.

Love is the broccoli of life.

To paraphrase I Corinthians, though a child should score a perfect score on the SAT, graduate with honors from Harvard, write a New York times bestseller, head up a major corporation, find the cure for cancer or be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, if that child has not love, he is as sounding brass

or tinkling cymbals.

On the other hand, though a child speaks not three languages, fails Algebra twice, cannot compare or contrast two characters in two major works of literature, never marries, lives out his life in a small one-room cottage and never does one single notable act in the eyes of the world, if that child's heart reflects love towards all God's creations, he will find his name in God's book of everlasting treasures.

He shall have discovered "Eternity" and will have become master of his own soul.

God is Love.

Now, I believe common core standards need frequent assessments. In fact, I recommend a daily test be administered to every parent. The same three test questions can be used each day:

- Question One: Today, what did I do to prepare my child's heart to be inspired?
- Question Two: Today, what vision of great things did I give my child to hope for?
- Question Three: Today, what did I teach the right-use of in love?

If we adopt these three common core standards, the outcome that we can expect is to see a new heart and a new world emerge in just a few years—a Golden Age of peace.

For thousands of years, poets, prophets and sages—the dreamers of the world—have longed for a world of peace ruled by love, beauty and justice. Yet, the history of the world has been almost one continuous story of war and bloodshed; of conquering and being conquered. Still, the dream persists.

Julia Ward Howe, who gave us our *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, shared this vision:

> One night I experienced a sudden awakening. I had a vision of a new era which is to dawn for mankind and in

> which men and women are battling unitedly for the uplifting of the race.
>
> There seemed to be a new, a wondrous permeating light, the glory of which I cannot attempt to put in human words—the light of new-born hope blazing. And then I saw victory. All of evil was gone from the earth. Misery was blotted out. Mankind was ready to march forward in a new era of human understanding—the era of perfect love, of peace, passing all understanding.

Upon being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1954, Albert Schweitzer gave these words in a memorable speech:

> The idea that the reign of peace must come one day has been given expression by a number of peoples who have attained a certain level of civilization. In Palestine it appeared for the first time in the words of the prophet Amos in the eighth century B.C. and it continues to live in the Jewish and Christian religions as the belief in the Kingdom of God. It figures in the doctrine taught by the great Chinese thinkers: Confucius and Lao-tse in the sixth century B.C. It reappears in Tolstoy and in other contemporary European thinkers. People have labeled it a utopia. But the situation today is such that it must become reality in one way or another; otherwise mankind will perish...
>
> Decisive steps must be taken to ensure peace, and decisive results obtained without delay. Only through the spirit can all this be done. Is the spirit capable of achieving what we in our distress must expect of it? Let us not underestimate its power, the evidence of which can be seen throughout the history of mankind…
>
> Many a truth has lain unnoticed for a long time, ignored simply because no one perceived its potential for becoming reality.

Faith, Hope and Charity will lift our world.

To borrow the words from another dreamer: "What shall I say…. To awaken in your hearts…the desire to realize this

glorious anticipation? … I can only call upon God…to make my words as sparks of fire, to fall upon the tinder of your hearts and kindle them into flame. That from this hour your souls may be lit up with the light of your glorious destiny, that you may live for God and his kingdom, not simply for yourselves and the perishable things of the earth."

Or in other words, to live for diamonds, not just sandcastles.

Do you remember the Magic Eye books that were popular a few years back? When you looked at the pages, they just looked like random designs. But if you looked at them long enough and in just the right way, a clear 3D-image would suddenly pop out at you.

I had a Magic Eye moment with history recently. That's the best way I can describe it. I had been studying the stories of many of the nations of the world and I was looking at a world map, thinking of these stories. As I looked at each country one at a time, I noticed how many of them had a time in history when they seemed to take center stage, with a spotlight shown on them. And in that light, they left a lesson for the world, and then faded into the background and another nation took its turn. I thought about what I had learned from each one:

Ancient Greece: beauty
Ancient Rome: law and justice
China: respect for elders and honoring ancestors
France: equality and equal justice
Israel (Hebrews): the fatherhood of God and liberty in law
Saracens: love of learning in an atmosphere of freedom
India: power of peaceful measures
Africa: simple and pure faith
Native Americans: reverence for Nature
England: refinement through literature
Holland, Scotland/Ireland: liberty is worth dying for

It was primarily Irish and Scotch blood that flowed in the

veins of our early patriot fighters.

Other nations left behind painful lessons. They showed us the misery and suffering under the hands of tyranny and oppression. They taught us about the cruelty of greed and corruption in nations whose highest ideal is gold. And they displayed the savagery and barbarism—the rot and decay—when spiritual darkness set in.

Some people are offended at the thought of American exceptionalism. I am not. I say to the world, we are exceptional because we are your children. Admittedly, lately we have behaved as spoiled children always do who are lavished with too many unearned gifts. But please give us another chance. Let us turn our hearts once again to you, our fathers, and learn from your stories all the lessons you have taught us. And from those many stories, let us, for the first time in human history, gather them into one great whole—*e pluribus unum*—out of many, one.

But there is one story, one lesson, one Truth that has not yet been brought to center stage for all the world to see. Maybe America has not yet had her chance to shine. Maybe this final story before ushering in an era of peace will be ours to tell. Interestingly, it's a story embedded deeply in the spirit of the German people, and according to the 2000 Census, there are more Americans with German roots than any other single nationality. Wagner, the great German composer, set the story to music. It's the story found in part in The Niebelungenlied and it briefly goes like this:

In the Rhine River lived three beautiful maidens—the Rhine daughters. Carelessly, one day, they lost the gold that had been entrusted to them by their father. They knew whoever molded the gold into a ring would have all power upon the earth, save love. The hideous little creature, Alberich the Niebelung, who seized it, laughed wickedly, "What do I care for love if I have all the gold I want?" Under his cruel power, the people cried out, "That wretched Alberich, with his ring

of gold has made us all slaves! With it he drives us down into the earth to get more gold. This curse of gold has filled our world with despair."

The gold ring passed from one owner to another, causing misery to all who possessed it until it came into the hands of the beautiful and noble Brunhilde who courageously returned it to the rightful owners, the Rhine-daughters. At long last, gold no longer held power over the hearts of men. Hurry, worry, falsehood, greed and envy vanished from the earth. Anxiety disappeared from the brows of the tired fathers. A new happiness came into the eyes of the mothers. A greater power than gold had come to rule the world, and that power was Love.

You young mothers and young fathers who are closest to the hearts of the rising generation: The heavens are watching and the earth is waiting for you.

May we adopt a new Common Core standard. If we will prepare the hearts of our children to be inspired; if we will give them a vision of wonderful things to hope for; and if we will teach them the right-use of all things in love, we will yet see the rising of that city shining upon a hill seen in vision by our Pilgrim fathers and our ancient prophets.

"And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising," saying, "Teach us your ways that we may go home and teach our people," and righteousness will flood the earth, just as Isaiah prophesied. And our sons and daughters, and their sons and daughters, will be found singing songs of everlasting joy.

Romancing the Heart and Building the Kingdom Within

One of my little granddaughters, almost from the time she first learned to talk, always included this request in her every prayer: Please bless us that we will all have good imaginations. My daughter and I had no idea where that came from, but it lasted for several years. Given what I now know about the importance of the imagination, all I can say is, "Out of the mouths of babes..." What a different world we would have if we all had good imaginations.

I had an old book randomly appear when I was searching for something else one day. It was written in 1885 by a Dr. Curry and it was called *Imagination and Dramatic Instinct: Some Practical Steps for Their Development*. I want to include several sections from this book to share some of his insights. It's pretty heavy thinking so stay with me.

He opens with a quote from Professor Charles Eliot Norton: "In the curriculums of most of our…institutions of learning…no place is given to that instruction which has for its end the cultivation of the imagination and the sentiments, through the refining of the perceptions and the quickening of the love of beauty." He continued, "Education, say some of our legislators, must give a means of making a living; our public schools must train up practical citizens; boys and girls must be educated in the practical arts of life; the ornamental has no place in the school-room."

But—he says, they utterly fail to grasp the nature of the imagination and its relation to daily life. And I love his definition of imagination: It's the "thinking of the heart."

The "thinking of the heart" is what Mr. Rogers taught: "I want to be more concerned with a sense of wonder than with information. I want to place a higher value on those things that are not seen than those things that are seen." He taught that everything that really matters isn't found in the words on a page—they're found in the white spaces between the words; the white spaces between the lines. They are the ah-hah moments when the light goes on and we get flashes of pure inspiration.

This is the realm of the imagination. The heart with no imagination is a hard heart.

And then Dr. Curry goes on to list its benefits:

Work without imagination is drudgery, but with its humblest employment is lifted into the realm of beauty and art.

The imagination is the source of all inspiration and interest in life.

Imagination gives charm to the humblest home.

A neglected imagination is one of the leading causes of the degradation of character, while its right use is one of the highest characteristics of the human being.

It is vital for creativity. It gives man taste and refinement.

Without imagination, we cannot comprehend universal principles. We cannot comprehend all that Nature has to teach us.

Imagination not only creates all art, but it appreciates art. Without its presence there can be no genuine love of art; without it, the language of art is unintelligible, its voice unheard, its spirit unfelt.

Imagination makes the individual an heir to all the ages. By its power, we can become a Greek, and see as the Greeks saw, and feel as the Greeks felt.

The faculty which gives birth to ideals is imagination. Without it, there can be little improvement in the ideals of a man or a nation. And no age, no nation, no individual can be elevated except by elevating its ideals.

It is the part of the soul that gives hope because it enables us to see a new and better world in the midst of the old, a new life in the midst of death, a new character in the midst of degradation. Without imagination, there is no hope. Where there is no vision, the people perish.

Imagination enables us to enter into sympathy with our fellowman. By its power alone can we appreciate the point of view of those different from ourselves. Without imagination, each of us would be alone; each of us would be cold and selfish.

Imagination gives us the power to penetrate to the heart of Nature; it is the faculty which sees beauty and loveliness.

Imagination alone enables man to realize eternity. The ordinary conceptions of the mind cannot embrace infinity, or God. Imagination alone enables men to transcend time and space, to see the eternal through the temporal, the spiritual beneath the physical, the soul underlying all.

This makes me think of the Beatitude: Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God, I believe not only in a life to come, but they will see Him everywhere now—in nature, in art and music, literature and poetry, and in lives of men and women and the histories of nations. The hard heart—the heart without imagination—cannot see Him anywhere.

The imagination is the fountainhead of all noble feeling, and upon its discipline depends any true education of the emotions. It is needed to prevent isolation of ideas, and the hardening of truths into mere facts. It is needed to place ideas and facts in sympathetic relationship with one another; to give the spirit and not the letter, truth and not mere fact, the soul and not the mere body.

It sees truth from the heart, and not by the external. It creates, as Nature does, from the center outward, [from within, out]. Imagination does not perceive fragments; it sees the whole at once. It is always characterized by simplicity, by unity and truth. It is the soul of all inspiration. Imagination vitalizes

all knowledge…and enables the soul to feel the life of the universe permeating every object.

Let me just interject here—If you have a difficult time comprehending and capturing the vision of educating the heart, I wouldn't be too hard on yourself. Most of us grew up in a mind-based system that never developed the imagination or the thinking of the heart. But as you engage in the languages of the heart that you will learn more about, you will find new neural pathways opening up and your vision will enlarge and expand as you go along.

Dr. Curry goes on to explain that the dramatic instinct is closely tied with the imagination; drama in the sense that it is about acting; acting upon the impulses of the imagination. The little child who is imaginative always shows it by dramatic actions in his play. The man who has killed his dramatic instinct has become unsympathetic, and can never appreciate any one's point of view but his own. The dramatic instinct trains us to a deep insight into the motives of man.

Together, they redeem the mind from narrowness and selfishness; they enable the individual to appreciate the point of view, the feelings, motives and characters of his fellowmen; they open his eyes to read the various languages of human art; they enable him to commune on a higher plane and lift him into communion with the art and spirit of every age and nation.

Where the imagination is inactive, all expression is mechanical and cold. A lack of sympathy is a lack of imagination.

Can you begin to see why that simple prayer: "Bless us all that we will have good imaginations" would change the world?

And then he goes on to teach how to train and develop the imagination. And the answer is simple as all Truth is. Basically, it's to do the opposite of what we are doing in the education of our children right now. Our focus on academics in childhood—the mechanics of learning—is hardening the hearts and killing the imagination of our children. The act of

decoding a word does not make a child a reader. The act of constructing a sentence does not make a child a writer. Only an active imagination can do that. But where do we place our attention?

Dr. Curry taught the method of studying and training these powers that he recommends is essentially the same as that adopted in the schools of the early Greeks—the Greeks of the Golden age—whose development of the artistic nature is universally considered to have been the highest ever known.

He says the best method of developing the imagination is by the study of Nature and poetic expression. So sending your kids out to play in nature and the rhymes you share is one of the best things you can do in childhood! He continues: A sympathetic love of the beautiful in Nature is characteristic of noble imagination. The influence of Nature in the education of the human mind cannot be over-estimated. Wordsworth has taught us to realize the power of Nature to stimulate and unfold the energies of the soul. All art proceeds from wonder.

Nature alone, however, is inadequate to secure the full power of imagination. Thousands have grown up in the midst of the greatest beauty of Nature with low and sensuous ideals, and without having their sense of beauty awakened. Art is therefore needed to awaken us to her gifts. That is the role of art—to awaken feeling within us.

What form of art should be studied? Every form as far as possible; for each art is a distinct language, which expresses some aspect of the human soul and reveals some truth which can be apprehended in no other way. Music, poetry, paintings—all are needed.

Every great art is a special language of the human spirit, and he who desires to awaken his artistic nature will learn to read all these languages. That statement is worth repeating. Every great art is a special language of the human spirit, and he who desires to awaken his artistic nature will learn to read

all these languages. That is the course of study in our Mother's University—to learn to read all these languages.

At the present time, a majority of the studies in all grades of schools concern themselves chiefly with the acquisition of knowledge.

The too exclusive study of science is slowly leading to the realization of the inadequacy of facts to develop the whole man harmoniously and completely.

There it is again—Mind is only half of what is needed!

The great scientist, Charles Darwin reflected, "Up to the age of thirty, or beyond it, poetry of many kinds—such as the works of Milton, Gray, Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley—gave me great pleasure; and even as a schoolboy I took intense delight in Shakespeare, especially in the historical plays. I have also said that formerly pictures gave me considerable, and music very great, delight. But now for many years I cannot endure to read a line of poetry; I have tried lately to read Shakespeare, and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated me. I have also almost lost my taste for pictures or music…. My mind seems to have become a machine for grinding out general laws out of large collections of facts; … If I had to live my life again, I would have made a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music at least once a week; for perhaps the parts of my brain now atrophied would thus have been kept active through use. The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature."

That which we don't use, atrophies from dis-use. By neglecting the Arts in the education of our children, we are hardening their hearts. And what little attention we give the Arts is through mechanical and scientific means—analyzing its parts. Art can only be studied as art and by means of art. Which is a lot of what you will be learning as you go through the writings in the Mother's University.

I know I've spent a lot of time reading Dr. Curry's words, but I think they are powerful. But now let me turn your attention to the most important part of what he suggests in the education of the imagination.

"The most adequate method of…developing the imagination and artistic nature is by means of the spoken word—the simplest and most natural form of Art. It was the attention given by the Greeks to the spoken word that caused them to be the most artistic of peoples. By far the most of the work of their schools was the study and recitation of the works of their poets. While they may have slighted the written word, and exaggerated too much the importance of speech, we in our day have gone to the other extreme, and are exaggerating the importance of writing as an agent of education, to the exclusion of the earlier and more simple and natural method of the human voice.

The voice is the little child's first conscious agent of expression; it is man's chief means of communication; it is the fullest of the life and energy of the human soul; it is the simplest and most natural agent of the faculties of the mind. Some may consider the Greeks to have been the greatest masters of writing in the world, and this is true; but their writing was great because it was founded upon and developed by their speech.

The voice connects thought and emotion. The action of the mind in writing is not the same as that in reading and speaking. Vocal expression is the direct result of the free, spontaneous impulses of mind and heart.

So let me leave Dr. Curry for a minute and share what I see. From the moment a child can hold a pencil, we are intent on making him write and to read words on a page. But developmentally, is that the best place to start? He can express himself far more naturally in speech. If we allow and encourage the vocal expression of story and poetry and thought and conversation, written language will flow quite naturally in its

proper time and place.

The child who hears the music in the voice of the mother reading aloud to him will have much greater comprehension when he begins to read. I think it's interesting that Abraham Lincoln had the habit of reading great literature aloud, even to himself. It was that connection to emotion through the voice.

So let me pull together these lessons for educating hearts.

If we want to build strong imaginations, we must learn the languages of all the Arts—Music, Pictures, Poetry and Story. That is the focus of the next section—to begin to paint a picture of what that looks like. Childhood is the best time to do that because their hearts are open and impressionable and not yet cluttered with all the activities of the mind.

And always look to the voice as the greatest teacher of all. Pay attention to the music in your voice as you read to your children and teach them. Allow them ample opportunity to use their voices in expression, in recitation of poetry, in expressing thoughts and ideas in conversation. Encourage them to read aloud. Engage in dramatic experiences like the plays you'll find in the Enrichment section. The more you focus on writing skills in childhood, the more you will shut down this gateway to the heart and to the imagination.

I thought it was strange when I kept coming across titles in the older children's books like Romance of the Civil War or Revolutionary War or Romance of Scotland. Was it all about the love affairs going on because that's what I think of when I hear the word romance. The modern definition is all about courting and wooing and the relationship between two people who love each other. But when I checked Webster's 1828 dictionary, I found it had to do with interesting the sensibilities of the heart, or the passion of wonder and curiosity.

With that definition, isn't that what we are trying to do—either within our own hearts, but especially in the hearts of our children—to interest the feelings of the heart and awaken

the passion of wonder and curiosity? Your job as a mother is to romance their hearts. I like that. And I tell you what—if my husband had introduced himself and immediately invited me over to do his laundry and scrub his toilet, the relationship would not have gone very far. It was the flowers and the chocolate and the sweet nothings whispered in my ear that romanced my heart and has kept him my best friend for nearly 50 years now.

The Arts are what make it possible for you to Romance your children's hearts. Sometimes I hear a mom say that she feels like she is neglecting her children's education because all they are doing is reading aloud lots of stories and her kids just want to engage in imaginative play all day or go outside and play in nature. Well, guess what. That's exactly what they should be doing if you want to tend to their imaginations. You have been called to be an artist, not a technician.

Remember the story of Sleeping Beauty? In the story, Beauty had gone to sleep, and when she fell asleep, the entire kingdom became lifeless and colorless. Soon noxious briers and thorns and tangled vines grew around the sleeping kingdom. Prince Philip valiantly drew his sword of truth and protected himself with his shield of righteousness to make his way through the tangled mess and fight the evil Maleficent. But that isn't what brought the kingdom back to life. The thing that brought the kingdom back to life was his love of Beauty. When Beauty received true love's first kiss, Beauty awoke and the kingdom gloriously sprang to life.

We're romancing hearts to awaken beauty.

Louisa May Alcott wrote a little poem that begins: I have a little kingdom where thoughts and feelings dwell.

It is to that little kingdom within the hearts of your children—and your own heart—that you want to tend and cultivate. And here are the decorating tips: Fill the air with worthy music. Line the walls with masterpieces of fine art. Furnish the rooms with poetry. Invite great souls to dine with you and

listen to their stories. And beautify the grounds with fields of flowers and canopies of trees.

For as Luke said, "A good man…or a good woman…out of the good treasures of his or her heart bringeth forth that which is good."

Bless us all to have good imaginations.

The Pattern for Learning and Creation

A Pattern for Learning

HEART	MIND	SPIRIT
Impressions, Feelings, Images	Facts, Information	Light, "Spiritual Sunshine"
ARTS	SCIENCE	FAITH
Desire	Rules	Creation
Random, Spontaneous	Systematic, Sequential	Purposeful
Long-term Memory	Short-term Memory	Infinite, Eternal

I will now unfold the simple pattern for learning and creation I mentioned in the introduction.

As has been mentioned, we are a very academically-minded culture. Our schools are focused on training the minds of our children. You know when you are in the realm of the mind because it can be tested and measured. The buzz words are critical thinking skills and scientific reasoning. Minds are fed with facts and information, words, that can conveniently be organized into grade level curriculum and tested, providing measurable outcomes demanded by those who hand out the money to the schools.

The mind functions in the realm of Science, which is, in essence, all about discovering the laws, rules and principles upon which everything in the world and universe operates. And so we teach our children the rules of math, the rules of grammar, punctuation and spelling. We teach them the laws

of physics, the laws of thermodynamics and the laws of economics.

The words 'law' and 'order' go together. Complying with rules creates order. If you've ever traveled to a foreign country where there are no traffic laws, you know how chaotic and dangerous it is to drive. On the other hand, scientists who gaze out into the universe are struck with awe at the perfect order, harmony and majesty of galaxies and stars and planets all abiding the laws within their respective spheres.

There are also principles and laws by which civilizations prosper and flourish; our liberty is in law; even happiness is governed by law.

Law is a good thing.

Which is why it puzzles me when I've heard of students asking their teachers why they have to learn all the rules and the teacher responds, "You have to learn the rules so you can break them." Throwing out all the rules seems to be the hallmark of our generation. Just do whatever feels good. We have millions of little girls singing, "No right or wrong, no rules for me, I'm free. Let it go." For a system that prides itself on reason and logic, spending all this time learning rules so we can break them is, in the word of Mr. Spock, illogical.

But I digress.

This type of learning is systematic and sequential. You have to learn the rules of arithmetic before you can master the rules of algebra.

Facts and information are very hard to hold on to and most go into short-term memory. Much of the time in school is spent trying to get information to stick. A child may hold on to facts long enough to take the test, but then they tend to wash away. We use words like cold and hard to describe facts.

And we use a word for the type of learning that goes on in school. We call it academic learning.

Have you ever looked up the definition of "academic"?

This is what I found in the Merriam-Webster online dictionary: having no practical importance; not involving or relating to anything real or practical; having no practical or useful significance.

And as if that's not bad enough, we don't just want academics. We want rigorous academics. Rigorous and *rigor mortis* have the same root word—rigor, which means stiffness and rigidness; even voluntary submission to pain. We use painful words like drilling facts into kids.

And we want to extend the academic year and start academics at younger and younger ages?

Remember what Aristotle allegedly said over 2000 years ago? "Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all." Plato also understood: "All learning is based in emotion." The heart is what pumps life into the brain. One cannot survive without the other.

Yet, here we are, cutting the heart out of education. The heart is fed with feelings, impressions, and images which are delivered by the Arts, which include music, pictures, poetry and story. The heart is the realm of the imagination.

This stage of learning is all about desire; of warming and opening the heart. As Dr. Rich Melheim writes: "The brain is filled with gatekeepers designed to keep information out… you have to open the kid before you open the book." These gatekeepers respond to pleasurable experiences, which the Arts provide. When you "get to the emotional centers, the gates of intellect fly open wide."

Learning in this stage can be random and spontaneous because impressions made on the heart go into long-term memory and are held onto long enough to connect and interlace with other impressions. If a fact can be connected to something the heart cares about, it places the fact in long-term storage.

Cutting out the heart is not good. Studies reveal emotional well-being of college students is at the lowest level in

25 years. Over half of college students in one particular study reported severe feelings of hopelessness and despair. Half! And in the job market, as one employer put it, they're getting lots of resumes from hopeful engineers, but what they're looking for and not finding are engineers with personality.

These are symptoms of heart problems arising from our neglect of the heart.

The final part of this pattern of learning is not allowed in our schools: Spirit. I was reading an old 1900 Chemistry textbook and it talked about the elements the Ancients identified: air, water, earth, fire and the fifth was an element they could sense was there, but couldn't quite put their finger on it. It was a spiritual element and they called it ether. In the spirit of scientific inquiry that tests and measures only that which you can see and handle, the fifth element was dropped, yet we still hold on to the word "ether" in the word "ethereal" which describes something heavenly or celestial, something of another dimension. Something higher than us.

This Spirit is like a Spiritual Sunshine to us. It is inspiration—to be inspired means to take "in spirit."

It requires our Faith to believe in its existence because you have to believe in something you cannot handle or measure. It is the same evidential demands of scientific inquiry that keeps talk of the spiritual out of our schools. I can't see the wind, either, or hold it in my hands, but I can see it moving the leaves on the trees and can feel it blowing on my face. If we have not felt it ourselves, we can still see the Spirit's effect in the lives of others. We recognize its presence by its fruits: Joy, Peace, Love, Kindness, Gentleness.

This Spirit or Light is a creative force. It tends to lift, expand and multiply, and everything created under the influence of the spirit yields joy, peace and love. It is the spirit that gives understanding to our learning. The architect who loves the beautiful and learns the skills of building, under the influence of the Spirit will create structures that are not only

functional but which inspire the heart with beauty as well. The businessman who loves fairness and people and who learns the rules of success, under the influence of the Spirit will create businesses that will bless and bring joy to many lives.

Michelangelo, whose heart loved the beautiful and who mastered the skills of painting and sculpture, wrote, "My unassisted heart is barren clay." He knew the source of his inspiration and genius.

As did Brahms who wrote, "I will tell you about my method of communication with the Infinite, for all truly inspired ideas come from God. Beethoven, who was my ideal, was well aware of this. When I feel the urge, I begin by appealing directly to my Maker—straightway the ideas flow upon me—directly from God—clothed in right forms, harmonies and orchestrations."

But the spirit cannot create something from nothing. Rather it organizes the raw materials we gather through our learning and turns them into a usefulness. The more we give the Spirit to work with, the more it can accomplish through us.

This is the right-useness of learning. The purest stream, if there is no outlet, will eventually stagnate and stink. The purest knowledge and desires, with no outlet, with no right-useness of them, will eventually rot, just like our friend Paracelsus mentioned in the Sandcastles talk.

This stage of learning is very purposeful and customized to the calling and mission of the individual. And the learning is everlasting and eternal. This is the True Education described by Charlotte Mason, between the child's soul and God.

I now find this pattern all over the place.

Both the Old and New Testaments are front end loaded with stories to warm and open hearts. Most of the stories we're familiar with are in the book of Genesis and the Four

Gospels. Then come the laws, commandments and doctrines. Finally, the back end has books that require much preparatory learning. The true meaning of books like Isaiah and Revelation can only be revealed spirit to spirit.

John the Baptist's role was to warm and open the hearts of the people so they would be prepared to receive Jesus who taught the law of the gospel in preparation for receiving the Holy Ghost, whose role is to "teach us all things which we should do."

I also notice the first commandment is to love, not to obey. Obedience is second. The desire for the good and the beautiful along with obedience to correct principles will create not only heaven on earth, but heaven in the world to come.

I see the pattern in history. The ancient Greeks were known for their love Beauty and the Arts, the Romans, their love of law and justice, and then came Jesus who taught of a spiritual kingdom.

I see the pattern in nature. The seed that is planted in the ground will not begin to grow until the ground is warmed. And much of that first growth is in developing a strong root system. Without that root system underground—unseen to the eye—the plant will never grow long enough to flower. The stem will wither and die. The flower alone contains all the seeds with which to multiply and replenish the earth.

I see the pattern in music. The heart is the melody, the mind is the rhythm or beat and the spirit brings in all the harmonies.

And I see it in the development of us as human beings. The heart develops before the brain within the womb and emotions develop before the intellect outside the womb. The first eight years, in particular, are reserved by nature for tending to the heart when a child's heart is open to impressions and feelings because the mind is not yet too cluttered.

To me, an ounce of morning is worth a pound of afternoon where inspiration is concerned. Inspiration comes to me

in the very early morning hours, often before the sun comes up, when my mind is uncluttered. Childhood is the early morning of life.

So how does this pattern apply to learning? I would suggest, don't attempt to teach any principle, doctrine or academic subject until after you have sufficiently warmed and opened the heart. Leonardo da Vinci wrote: "Study without desire spoils the memory, and it retains nothing it takes in." And Plato agreed: "Knowledge which is acquired under compulsion obtains no hold on the mind." Front-end load the learning experience with story, rhyme, song, images and love. And then, make sure you leave room for the Spirit to do its work. When you ask all the questions and structure all the learning, you interfere with that individualized, customized spiritual learning experience.

Like St. Exupery advises: "When you want to build a ship, do not begin by gathering wood, cutting boards, and distributing work, but waken within the heart of man the desire for the vast and endless sea."

Take away the Spirit, take away the heart, and all that's left is purely academic.

> Play is the work of childhood and large chunks of a child's day should be cleared for free, open, magical, imaginative play. Pestalozzi used the term 'sense-impressions' to describe the work for these early years. The more children are allowed to touch and feel and experience, the deeper the learning will be in later years.

Heart and Art

by Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Though critics may bow to art, and I am its own true lover,
It is not art, but heart, which wins the wide world over.
Though smooth be the heartless prayer, no ear in Heaven will mind it,
And the finest phrase falls dead if there is no feeling behind it.
Though perfect the player's touch, little, if any, he sways us,
Unless we feel his heart throb through the music he plays us.
Though the poet may spend his life in skilfully rounding a measure,
Unless he writes from a full, warm heart he gives us little pleasure.

So it is not the speech which tells, but the impulse which goes with the saying;
And it is not the words of the prayer, but the yearning back of the praying.
It is not the artist's skill which into our soul comes stealing
With a joy that is almost pain, but it is the player's feeling.
And it is not the poet's song, though sweeter than sweet bells chiming,
Which thrills us through and through, but the heart which beats under the rhyming.
And therefore I say again, though I am art's own true lover,
That it is not art, but heart, which wins the wide world over.



SECTION THREE:

Joy is Everywhere

How do we grow joy?



THE ARTS ARE THE KEYS TO SOFTEN AND OPEN HEARTS

I have come to believe the purpose of education is to help children live lives of maximum joy.

"Once a child played on the sea-shore. The waves sang and the sand shone and the pebbles glistened. There was light everywhere; light from the blue sky, and from the moving water, and from the gleaming pebbles. The little one, in its happiness, sang with the murmuring sea and played with the stones and the shells that lay about. Joy was everywhere and the child was filled with it."

"The whole world is full of unworked joy-mines. Everywhere we go we find all sorts of happiness-producing material, if we only know how to extract it."

Orison Swett Marden
Joys of Living

How Do We Grow Our Capacity for Joy?

I see something extraordinary on the horizon and, as I have said, women and especially mothers play a key role. Now that you understand the difference between mind and heart, let me begin to unfold what I see by opening with an impression of contrasts.

I was flying home from speaking at a conference and as I was looking down at the cities below, I was thinking how tiny they looked from where I was. And for whatever reason, I tried to picture the Tower of Babel down there, maybe because I was trying to imagine a really big building. I pictured how massive the tower looked to the ones who were building it. I could imagine them standing at the base of it, looking up and going, Wow! Look what we have built by the workmanship of our own hands! This is magnificent! We can see it must surely reach right up to heaven. We can just climb up there ourselves. And bring on the flood waters again. We've got it covered this time. We'll just climb our way to safety.

Then I tried to imagine it from God's perspective. I was just a couple of miles up, but even from my vantage point, it was small and insignificant. Then the tower switched to another tower in my mind's eye—some of the tallest towers in the world are bank towers. And I pictured all the money in the banks piled up in gold bricks around the tower. From my point of view, it was just a little speck down there. Then I tried to imagine how big the country was. I was maybe taking in 50 or 100 square miles. How far did the country go—for that matter, how big was 25,000 miles around the world! It

was huge! And that little bank tower and all its gold bricks became even more of a speck.

Then I thought of the earth which seemed so huge and imagined it next to the sun and the earth became a dot. Then the whole solar system was put against the Milky Way and our Solar System became a dot. Then the Milky Way was put against the universe, and the Milky Way became a dot. And that bank tower and the Tower of Babel became a tiny particle of nothing.

Then came the impression of the contrast. As I looked around, I saw light as far as the eye could see. And I thought of how we're taught the Light of God fills the immensity of space. Think of the comparison between the little tower of gold and this Light. We use different words for this Light: Spirit of the Lord, Truth, Inspiration, Living Waters that when we drink this water, we never thirst again.

The effect of this Light upon us, the fruits of this spirit are Peace, Love, Joy and Understanding. These are its gifts. The Light is a pearl of great price, that the merchant would sell all he had to possess it.

In earth's economy, the richest person is the one with the most money. In heaven's economy, the richest person is the one with the greatest capacity for this endless Light and thereby the greatest capacity for Peace, Love and Joy.

So the question at hand is how do we increase our capacity for Light so that more of it can be released in the world? We see forces combining together to do works of darkness and destruction. Where are the forces that combine together to release light?

Helping our children to live lives of maximum joy is the purpose of this heart-based method of learning. So understanding the answer to this question is critical.

I believe those two forces are Heart and Mind working in combination, or in other words, the more the heart desires that which is good and beautiful and true, and the more the

mind is willing to comply with true principles and laws, the greater the release of light in our lives. Take away either half of the combination, and the light is blocked. Let me try and build my case.

As I have stated before, we are a very mind-focused, academic-based culture. We lean heavily towards the Mind side of the combination. Let's do a quick review. Remember how you can tell if you are in the realm of the mind? You are in the realm of the mind if you can test and measure it. How far away is the sun? What is the population of New York? The mind feeds on facts and information. We associate Reason and Science with the mind which is concerned with discovering the laws, principles and rules by which the universe operates. The mind demands proof and hard evidence. Science and Mind are good.

The heart on the other hand is immeasurable. How wide is joy? How deep is love? The heart is the place of desires, dreams and visions. The Arts—Music, Imagery, Poetry and Story—warm and open hearts and travel to a place deep within us that words alone cannot reach. Hard-heartedness blocks Light.

There is an order to this combination. Notice the heart develops before the brain within the womb and emotions develop before the intellect outside the womb. It appears Nature has reserved childhood for making impressions on the heart while it is open and uncluttered. And mothers are divinely gifted for this heart work.

As simple as the combination of Heart and Mind appears, the world has had a really hard time holding on to the balance. We lean towards one side or the other. Yet, history shows us that when Heart and Mind, Faith and Reason, Art and Science combine together in balance, there is a burst of light on the world. We call these Golden Ages.

Let me show you what I mean as I take you on a brief tour through history.

Let's first go back to 5th Century Ancient Greece which is known as the Golden Age of Greece. Here you find Socrates going around teaching people to think and question, functions of the mind. We see great dramatists such as Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes keeping the hearts of the people warm. Pericles is a wise ruler who has given the people wise rules to follow. But he is also a lover of the arts and he commissions buildings such as the Parthenon and the Acropolis that are built to the highest standards of math and engineering, but also crafted by artisans who love beauty. Heart and Mind. Even their ruins inspire us. The Ancient Greeks are known for their love of beauty and truth and they continue to influence the world 2500 years later.

Following a series of wars, the Greeks could sense their Golden Age was slipping and they started leaning towards the Mind to solve their problems. They reasoned that what they needed to do was to build large academies and teach the young men how to think and reason and persuade others. They hoped the academies would produce great leaders to lead them back to their Golden Age. But in the process, the heart was left behind. Not only did these academies fail to produce a single leader of note, the Greeks slipped into slavery, never to rise again.

Fast forward several hundred years. Now things have swung the other way, and you find a people who are ruled by their hearts. The power players of the time are the storytellers and bards who know they can sway the people any way they want with their stories and songs. The people are driven by their fears based in superstitions and false traditions. We call it the Dark Ages. Only half the combination so the light is blocked.

Now go forward a few more hundred years to the 14th century when the intellectual writings of the Greeks made their way to Europe by way of Italy, and there is this wonderful re-birth, which is what Renaissance means, and another

Golden Age where, for a time, Mind and Heart, Faith and Reason, Art and Science combine together. Look at the shining stars of the 1400s and 1500s: Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Shakespeare, Galileo, Copernicus, Kepler, Martin Luther. We see Columbus and all the explorers out looking for new worlds and possibilities. Light began to burst forth upon the earth.

And then, man looks around and says, "Man is magnificent! Look what we have accomplished by the workmanship of our own hands!" And they leave God and the heart behind and enter a new Age of Reason.

It was in this Age of Reason of the 18th Century that a tender-hearted, kind man arrives on the scene named Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. He looks around and notices that for all the learning going on, it's not making anyone's lives any better. The people are miserable. Especially the children. The adults are so anxious for them to get into the Greek writings that they start hammering Greek into them almost as soon as they can talk.

And so a great desire grew in his heart. He wrote: "I wish to wrest education from…cheap, artificial teaching tricks, and entrust it to the eternal process of nature herself, to the light which God has kindled and kept alive in the hearts of fathers and mothers…. Love is the sole and everlasting foundation in which to work."

He continued: "The primary law is this: the first instruction of the child should never be the business of the head or of the reason; it should always be the business of the…heart. It is for a long time the business of the heart, before it is the business of reason."

He was given charge over a classroom of orphans and started incorporating the tools of the heart—Story, Song, Pictures, and Rhymes even though he didn't have much to work with. Even then there were school administrators who stopped by. "Mr. Pestalozzi. Where are your test scores?" And Pesta-

lozzi would say, "Look around! The children are happy! They're engaged in learning! They're teaching each other!" Yet he would be given the stern look of disapproval.

Through his work, Pestalozzi came to realize that the mother is the most effective educator of the heart. He wrote: "The eternal laws of nature lead me back to your hand, Mother." He faced bitter opposition to the idea his whole life.

One of his followers was a man name Friederich Froebel who also understood it was the mothers who were the most important teachers of the heart. The problem was the mothers were overworked and exhausted just trying to keep their families alive. He knew they weren't likely to add one more thing to their lives. But he noticed it was usually the oldest daughter in the family who had charge of the younger ones. So he thought, "What if we open a school and invite these older girls to bring their younger siblings and teach them together so that when they become mothers, they will be prepared." He felt it may take three generations to implement the idea. So he created the Kinder-garten or Child-garden—a place to grow children and the first classes were formed to train future mothers. Love was to be the keystone. Froebel described the activities of this kindergarten: "Free play, several sorts of handiwork suited to little children, going for walks, learning music, both instrumental and vocal, learning the repetition of poetry, storytelling, looking at really good pictures; aiding in domestic occupations, gardening."

The years went by and the little mothers had children of their own, and these children were the ones that formed the first, actual kindergarten. Also these were the mothers who formed the first mothers' clubs. And it was the success of these clubs that attracted the attention of the authorities, who could not imagine any other purpose for a club than to hatch a plot against the government.

Officials thought: Here comes a man who thinks he knows more than all the priests and scholars who ever lived, and fills

the heads of fool women with the idea that they are born to teach instead of to work in the fields and keep house and wait on men. If this thing keeps on, men will have to get off the earth and women and children will run the world and do it by means of play! This thing has got to stop before Germany becomes the joke of mankind.

And so, in 1850, an interdict was placed on Friederich Froebel, making Kindergarten a crime. His ideas were spreading—success, at last, was at the door, he had interested the women and proved the fitness of women to teach. His mothers' clubs were numerous; love was the watchword. And in the midst of this flowering time, the official order came, without warning, apology or explanation, and from which there was no appeal. It crushed the life and broke the heart of Friederich Froebel.

The chapter in the book I gleaned this from closed with these words: "Men who govern should be those with a reasonable doubt concerning their own infallibility, and an earnest faith in men, women and children. To teach is better than to rule. We are all children in the Kindergarten of God."

I like that.

So here we are again, trying to convince mothers that they possess God-given gifts to do what no one else can do better, and that learning is best begun in play, in poetry, in story, picture, singing and music, and spending time in nature. It may yet take three more generations to get the idea firmly planted because it seems we have to keep starting over! Pestalozzi said it may take 300 years to get his idea to take hold. Can we be the generation that finally gets it right?

Although Pestalozzi and Froebel felt like failures in their lifetimes, their writings continued to influence other educators into the 19th century, like Charlotte Mason who wrote, "We allow no separation to grow up between the intellectual and spiritual life of children but teach them that the Divine Spirit has constant access to their spirits, and is their

Continual helper in all the interests, duties and joys of life." She taught that True education is between a child's soul and God.

Maria Montessori was also influenced by Pestalozzi. On the opening day of her school in one of the poorest sections of Rome, she read from Isaiah: "Arise, shine, for the light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." At the conclusion of her speech, she added, "Perhaps it may be that this children's Home may become a New Jerusalem, which, as it is multiplied…will bring LIGHT into education." She was criticized and asked what she meant, and she replied that she scarcely knew.

Pestalozzi also influenced Rudolf Steiner who created the Waldorf methodology and schools, still popular today.

And then something wonderful happened.

There was a group of intellectual giants—men and women—who were scholars in history, literature, nature, art and music. These are the great souls who have been my mentors. As they came to understand the importance of stories to warm and open children's hearts, they wrapped their great knowledge into stories for young people and loaded them with principles for happy living and fed children's hearts with desires for the love of the good and the beautiful and a faith in God. It's not uncommon to read in their prefaces things like: Dear boys and girls. I love you. I want you to be happy.

The years from 1880 to 1920 are known as a Golden Age of Children's Literature—the balance of Heart and Mind, Faith and Reason, Art and Science.

Then something else wonderful started to happen. The mothers started doing what mothers do. They started gathering and organizing and forming study groups to re-learn the lost arts of storytelling in their homes and there was a great storytelling revival in the early 1900s. Then, realizing the importance of educating a woman's heart for her important role as heart educator, and the difficulty for her to go away to

college, the Delphian Society was formed in 1910 with the intent to bring college home to busy mothers who could only study a few minutes a day. The Delphian Reading Course was the equivalent to a bachelor's degree in Classic Studies and included a study of History, Literature, Philosophy, Poetry, Fiction, Drama, Art, Ethics, Music, Nature Study and more. As women studied the great civilizations of the world, it included a look at home life and education. The focus was on culture—"To know the best that has been thought and said in the world" with the aim of personal improvement of each member, who, in turn, would lift all of society. It was about making of the mind, "a mansion of all lovely thoughts." Women formed study groups and met once a month to have conversations about what they were learning and they became a cultural uplift to their communities. Within a few years, over 2000 groups dotted the nation and were found in every major city.

Is it a coincidence that the generation that followed is known as The Greatest Generation?

Continuing with the tour of history, then came the 1920s and 30s and once again Man said, "Isn't Man magnificent" and an educator named John Dewey changed the course of education for decades to come. His intentions were revealed in a document to which he affixed his name in 1933, the Humanist Manifesto which declares: Reason and intelligence are the most effective instruments that humankind possesses. There is no substitute." And by the way, there is no God.

We have entered another age of reason, of facts and information, scientific proof and evidence, test and measure. And something has happened that Hans Christian Andersen warned would happen if the mind ruled. Remember the story of the Snow Queen I shared earlier? Our world has turned upside down. That which was bad is now seen as good and that which was good is now seen as bad; every fault is magnified and every good is mocked.

I hope you can begin to see why the call for more Math and Science, more rigorous academics, more focus on STEM subjects, the introduction of academics at earlier and earlier ages and our obsession with test scores is actually fueling our problems.

We are trying the failed solution of the Greeks.

But here's what I can't stop thinking about. This is the extraordinary event I can see just over the horizon. What if we can hold on to this height of intellect? They tell us knowledge is doubling every 72 hours! What if we can combine this height of mind with a proportionate depth of heart? Would we not expect to see a new burst of light upon the world and the entrance into a Golden Age unlike the world has ever seen?

Look at what technology has gifted us in just the last fifteen years to make this combination of Heart and Mind possible.

We have been gifted the finest literature that has ever been written, written by the greatest souls who have ever lived.

In the 10th century, a princess gave 200 sheep, a load of wheat, a load of rye, a load of millet and several costly furs for one copy of a German monk's writing.

In 1999, Internet Archive was formed for the purpose of digitizing every book that has ever been written and posting it online for anyone to read for free. There are now nearly 40 million books available in the online library and they are adding more than a thousand books a day which gives us instant access to the thoughts and ideas of the greatest men and women who have ever lived.

Part of that great harvest of books includes the children and young adult books included in Libraries of Hope and the writings of the heart educators I share in the Mother's University. The recent availability of their writings is enabling us to re-learn the lost arts of educating hearts of children which

have disappeared in our obsession with the mind. Along the way, technology gifted us with a tablet to make the reading of these treasures convenient and portable.

We have been gifted with access to fine art.

In the 15th Century, when the great Florentine artist Cimabue completed his Madonna, the shops were closed, workmen dropped their tools, farmers left their tasks, the soldiers were released from the camp, all the people assembled in the streets; the artist was borne on the shoulders of the multitude, the picture was lifted up and carried at the head of a procession that marched with music and banners and tumultuous shouts toward the church, where the canvas was hung that all might feast their eyes upon its loveliness.

All that celebration for one painting.

Today I can do a Google search and pull up hundreds of thousands of masterpieces of heart that have been hidden away in private estates, museums and palaces around the world.

We have been gifted with the Masterpieces of Music.

YouTube has only been around since 2005, but now I can pull up just about any great masterpiece of music and watch it performed by the finest musicians in the world. I get front row seats to the Bolshoi Ballet and the Metropolitan Opera. When I get ready to do my dishes, I can invite Leonard Bernstein into my kitchen, along with his entire symphony orchestra and give him a playlist to play for me. In surround sound. Without charge. And if he plays something I really love, I can ask him to play it again.

The kings and queens of yesterday, with all their wealth and power, could not have had the kind of heart education now delivered to the humblest home, for free. This is an education fit for a royal generation of a Golden Age.

I see just one missing piece for this combination of heart and mind to happen. And for that missing piece, I need to go back to the Golden Age of Ancient Greece. Scholars attribute

the opening of this age to a poet named Pindar who awakened a desire for beauty in the hearts of the Greeks through his poetry. But who awakened that desire in Pindar? I found the answer in an old children's book. Pindar's teachers as a youth were two women—Clyrtis and Myrna—two renowned singers who sang songs into his heart.

What we need now is a generation of mothers who can sing songs into the hearts of their children and awaken their desire to feast on this great harvest of the ages that has just been delivered to their homes, free for their use. But who will sing the songs into the mother's hearts for it will be out of the abundance and treasures of their hearts that the children will be fed.

Tending to mothers' hearts is what is behind the Mother's University at The Well-Educated Heart and through Mothers of Influence. We have everything we need to cultivate our hearts and the hearts of our children.

I see mothers picking up the work where it was left off a hundred years ago while we took a detour. But we needed this little detour. We needed this reign of the mind for technology to thrive and make it possible for the work to continue. Look at the labor-saving devices given you to free up your time for this work of cultivating hearts. You can put your dirty clothes in a washing machine, push a button and walk away. You can put your dirty dishes in a dishwasher, push a button and walk away. You can put dinner in the microwave and 5 minutes later, you're ready to eat. Turn on a faucet and hot water comes out. The mothers of our 6000-year written history must look upon our generation with envy.

But where much is given, much is expected.

I just want to close this little talk with a sampling of what a little light can do.

A daring experiment run in 1982 during the war between Lebanon and Israel was referenced by Gregg Braden in a book called *The Spontaneous Healing of Belief*. Researchers trained

a group of people to "feel" peace within. At appointed times on specific days of the month, these people were positioned throughout the war-torn areas of the Middle East. During the window of time when they were feeling peace, terrorist activities ceased, the rate of crimes against people went down, the number of emergency-room visits declined and the incidence of traffic declined. When the participants' feelings changed, the statistics were reversed. This study confirmed the earlier findings: When a small percentage of the population achieved peace within themselves, it was reflected in the world around them.

The study became known as the international Peace Project in the Middle East and the results were eventually published in The Journal of Conflict Resolution in 1988.

You are the first generation of mothers to arrive on the scene when all things have been prepared to usher in the next stage. In this section, you will learn about some of the tools you have to work with. I believe angels are standing by ready to assist you in this important work. A little leaven, a little salt, even a single candle in a dark room can make a difference. By small and simple means, great things will come to pass.

Music

"Music makes people more gentle and meek, more modest and understanding." –Martin Luther

A young woman was dying. Her baby had died at birth a few weeks previously, and since that time the mother had steadily failed. The doctor had just left her room saying emphatically that there was no hope and to give her anything she wanted.

She looked up at her agonized husband and said: "Music. I want music. I know that will cure me." The nurse thought it to be a foolhardy and useless errand, but the husband went in search of it.

The first day old familiar tunes and some of the Chopin that she had always loved, were played softly to her. Her body relaxed under the soothing influence, her nerves became less tense, her breathing deeper and more rhythmical, increasing the circulation. That night she slept. With the shutting out of the senses to the outside world the harmonic reaction brought about by the music continued its work of healing all through the night. The next day she was visibly stronger.

Halfway through World War I, music began to be used on a large scale "to help organize victory." How the men craved music. A victrola was carried lovingly from front lines to hospital. Music was used in every conceivable form as a comfort, as a relaxation from the horrors of war, and as a stimulus to the morale of the men. It acquired all the sacredness of a ministering angel.

Music was used to unite the soldiers in the Civil War. Isn't

it telling that both sides were singing the Battle Hymn of Freedom?

Florence Nightingale requested music for hospitals in the Crimean War. The mind blurred by contact with unspeakable horrors was quieted and made normal again.

"There is something wonderful in music. Words are wonderful enough, but music is more wonderful. It speaks not to our thoughts as words do; it speaks straight to our hearts and spirits, to the very core and root of our souls. Music soothes us, stirs us up, it puts noble feelings into us; it melts us to tears, we know not how. It is language by itself, just as perfect in its way as speech, as words, just as divine, just as blessed."

Music requires no middle man to explain it, as demonstrated by an experience shared by Dr. Karl Paulnack, Director of Music at Boston Conservatory. He and a violinist friend opened a performance at a nursing home in Fargo, ND with a piece written by Aaron Copland who had dedicated it to a young friend of his, a young pilot, who was shot down during World War II. They played the number with no explanation. Midway through the piece, an elderly man in a wheelchair near the front of the hall began to weep.

Before they started to play their second number, they stopped to tell a little about the piece they had just played and explained the circumstances under which Copland wrote the music and how he had dedicated it to a downed pilot. At the mention of this, the elderly man broke down in sobs and needed to be taken out of the hall.

Later the man was brought backstage, tears and all, to explain himself, as he shared:

"During World War II, I was a pilot, and I was in an aerial combat situation where one of my team's planes was hit. I watched my friend bail out, and watched his parachute open, but the Japanese planes that had engaged us returned and machine gunned across the parachute chords so as to separate the parachute from the pilot, and I watched my friend drop

away into the ocean, realizing that he was lost. I have not thought about this for many years, but during that first piece of music you played, this memory returned to me so vividly that it was as though I was reliving it. I didn't understand why this was happening, why now, but then when you came out to explain that this piece of music was written to commemorate a lost pilot, it was a little more than I could handle."

This is the powerful language of music.

This "heavenly Maid" is a chief restorer of our mental and physical equilibrium. Music has the power to solve many of our problems for us.

Sadly, it is being misused. Music has become a performing art. Ask someone if he or she is musical, and if that person does not play a musical instrument or sing, the answer will be no. Yet, every one of us is deeply and profoundly musical. If you don't believe me, try walking across your living room out of rhythm. Try saying something a-rhythmically. It's practically impossible. We involuntarily sense the home or keynote of music. If I were to sing down the notes of the scale and leave off the last one, you would automatically fill it in. Without the last note, you would feel incomplete, almost like you're left dangling out there. We long for home.

> God is its author, and not man; he laid
> The keynote of all harmonies; he planned
> All perfect combinations, and he made
> Us so we could hear and understand.

Certain combinations of notes make us feel sad, others hopeful, others give us longing. Music cheers, comforts, refines and elevates. Music is a means by which we can turn chaos into calm. Think of that next time the noise level of your home climbs to an unbearable level. Music can instantly change our moods.

One of the heart educators wrote: "It seems extravagant to claim that, if everyone could be shown how to follow a tune

and remember it, the world's unrest would be ameliorated, but this would seem to be a fact, nevertheless. Because, by doing so, each individual would become conscious of the harmony within himself.

"Yet we have worked many centuries to squeeze all the joy out of listening to music by making the means of enjoyment more and more complex, until now, when we find ourselves starving in spite of the abundance about us…. After starving our music sense, and trying our best, by wrong methods, to transform our reaction to it into a lifeless, analytical and empty thing, instead of the warm, glowing healthful reaction it should be, it is time we start working to put it all back again into its rightful place as a joygiver.

"Through music, the mind is stilled to outside influences and becomes a reflector for the inner light which comes only through stillness. Faith comes when the chaotic thoughts of the outside world are stilled. Music can do that."

But not all music. Some music relies so heavily on beat, that while it may get our toes tapping and our heels dancing, it does not have the power to stir our souls and in its coarseness, causes us to dull those refined sensitivities that bridge heaven and earth. Music is made up of melody, rhythm and harmonies and causes us to feel things deeply. But repetitive beat without melody has the opposite effect. It may shut down thought and feeling.

I read the story of a young boy who was forced to become a child soldier in the Sierra Leone conflict a few years ago. He described how they blasted loud rock music over the speakers in their camp twenty-four hours a day because it kept them from thinking or feeling anything. That's the only way they could stir them up to kill which they never would have done in their right minds. You see the same thing happening among primitive tribes on the warpath who worked themselves up to a frenzy with the steady strong beat of their war dance.

An interesting experiment was done with plants. One

group of plants was placed in a room filled with classical music. The other group of plants was placed with heavy rock. Go google it and you can see the outcome. Show it to your kids.

Music is vibration. It affects us at a deep level, because at our deepest level, we are vibration. Helen Keller loved listening to music even though she was completely deaf. She felt it through the vibrations. She was being interviewed for a magazine article in her home and Helen took her interviewer into the room where her radio was. She turned it on and placed her hand on it and smiled. "Ahh…. Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata." And she said, "Isn't that interesting that a man who was deaf composed this music so a blind woman could see the moonlight."

The intention of many of the great music masters was to reveal the very glory of God to the human heart, but many of our youth—and adults—have closed their ears. May I offer a couple of suggestions for opening those ears as illustrated in an article that appeared in the Reader's Digest over 50 years ago. It was written by a young journalist who had been invited to the home of a wealthy philanthropist. After dinner, the guests retired to a large room for an evening of chamber music. This young man said he was tone deaf and music meant nothing to him. It was almost painful. So, as the music started to play, he closed his ears and thought about other things.

After the first number, the man next to him asked, "You are fond of Bach?" He hadn't noticed that he was sitting next to Albert Einstein himself! He admitted he knew nothing of him upon which Einstein took him by the arm, led him out of the room, upstairs to a study. "Now then," he said. "Tell me a song you love." He named a Bing Crosby song and Einstein found the song on a record which he played and when it was done, said, "Now. Sing it back to me," which he did to the best of his ability and Einstein's warm eyes lit up. He continued doing the same with song after song until Einstein played a record of music without words and told his young

friend to hum it back, which he did. Einstein smiled and said, "Now we're ready for Bach." He led him back down to the hall and whispered, "Just allow yourself to listen. That's all."

The writer said to this day, Bach's *Sheep May Safely Graze* is one of his favorite pieces of music as he heard it for the first time that night, and which became the gateway to a great love of music.

Notice the two take away lessons here: First, familiarity with music helps us love it. And second, if the realm of music is to be entered through hearing, one must begin by being able to focus on the melody. One way is to draw a pitch picture, either in the air or on paper. As you practice paying attention to melody—the habit of attention—it be etched in the memory and can be recalled and reimagined at will, protecting us from feelings and thoughts that are destructive.

Afterwards, the hostess apologized that Einstein had missed so much of the evening's performance. Einstein replied, "My young friend and I were engaged in the greatest activity of which man is capable. We were opening up yet another fragment on the frontier of beauty."

You can open up yet another fragment on the frontier of beauty by engaging in the same activities. Make classical music familiar to your children by playing it in your homes from the days of their birth. Play it because you want to hear it. And then, find those moments to help them practice focusing on the melody

I often hear moms regret that they can't afford music lessons for their children. To them I say music is a free art. Your children are gifted with their first and most important instrument—their voices. Don't underestimate the blessing that song will add to their lives. It's that connection between mind and emotion. It will open pathways to the heart. The hard heart can't sing. Do you remember Captain Von Trapp in the Sound of Music? When he discovered his song again, he reconnected with the joys all around him, especially his

family. But maybe the reverse is also true—singing keeps us from growing hard hearts.

You can plant so many of the lessons you want your children to know through singing with them. Don't make it a lesson—be a singing mother. Be a singing family. How many activities can people join together at once? Not many! But singing is one of them. It will bind family hearts together.

I want to say something here about the singing of hymns. If ever there was something to bridge heaven and earth, it's a hymn. As you read the stories behind many of the most favorite hymns, you'll learn how often hymns came as a gift; that composers hurried to write down the words and melody that flowed through them.

A couple of our daughters had a friend who passed away as a young husband and father. Before he died, he requested that a particular hymn be sung by the congregation at his funeral. At the services, his widow explained that he told her this was the hymn the angels sang to comfort him as they surrounded his hospital bed in his final days.

On the tragic night the Titanic sank, the ship's musicians tried to calm the panicked passengers by playing hymns. They volunteered to remain on board, playing their music to the end. It is said "Nearer My God to Thee" was their final offering just before they sank with the ship. And as Jesus led his disciples to Gethsemane, they sang a hymn.

Hymns can bring great comfort, courage, hope and strength to the hearts of our children, if they know them.

When you're ready for another instrument, start looking around for a piano. I have probably one or two free or practically free pianos show up in my Facebook market page almost every single week. There are millions of pianos out there that no one is playing anymore. They're heavy to move and almost impossible to sell, so owners are happy if someone will haul it away for them. Seriously. Let people know you are looking for one. In my little church congregation, three families have

given their pianos away in just the last year because they didn't want to move them.

And then, don't jump into piano lessons too fast. The way we have been teaching the piano for decades has a huge failure rate. Ask any group of people how many took piano as a child, and the majority will raise their hands. But practically none of them ever became proficient enough for piano playing to be a joyful part of their lives. And I've talked to plenty of people whose experience with piano has scarred them for life.

The heart educators encouraged learning to play the piano by playing. Not by learning, in the beginning, the rules and the key signatures and the lines on the staff. Those are all mind things and extremely complex. When I play the piano, I'm not saying to myself, let's see, that note is on the F space and that note is on the B line. No, I'm looking at a pattern of how the notes are arranged on the page and because my brain has seen that pattern so many times and my fingers have played them so many times, I can sit down and sight read a piece of music. The patterns are all very familiar. And my fingers recognize them.

I trained as a Simply Music teacher and I would unfold patterns in the hands of students as young as five years old who would leave their very first lesson playing a complex, satisfying two handed piece that would have taken them probably two years to learn how to play by reading. The majority of piano students would have given up before getting to that point. We've got it backwards. If we first let them play, the reading will give meaning to something their fingers already recognize.

So pick up a piano and let your children pick out the melodies on the piano of the songs they are singing. And then let them play around and experiment with harmonies in the left hand. Or better yet, just let them play—experiment with creating music.

Light a fire of desire to learn an instrument by inviting

musicians to come perform in your home. If you have a college or university nearby with a music department, visit the department and see if they would recommend students who may be willing to come to your home and give mini performances. Or ask some local music teachers if they have some advanced students who would like an opportunity to perform. Invite a couple of other families over and have a pot-luck dinner. Warm home-cooked meals can be pretty enticing to college students! Have your performers keep it relatively short so your children don't get bored and ask them to play selections with children in mind. It's better to have your kids ask for more than to wonder when it is ever going to end. Over time, invite singers, violinists, harpists, trumpet players, guitarists and flutists and combinations of all the above. Show your children that music is shared among friends and not always performed on a stage. Keep it informal and friendly. Chances are, one of them will ignite a passion for an instrument. And who knows…maybe in some future day you will find you've entertained a future performing star unawares.

Or you can contact local music teachers and find out when their recitals are.

Music is such a beautiful gift to the world. Dr. Paulnack who I told you about earlier, in welcoming a new class to the Boston Conservatory, counseled the students:

"Someone is going to walk into your concert hall and bring you a mind that is confused, a heart that is overwhelmed, a soul that is weary. Whether they go out whole again will depend partly on how well you do your craft." Let that be the right-use of music from the beginning as your children learn to play an instrument—using it to serve and to be a cultural uplift to our world. Musicians are heart healers.

And now I'll close with some wisdom from Confucius: "Harmony has the power to draw Heaven downwards to the earth. It inspires men to love the good, and to do their duty. If one should desire to know whether a kingdom is well

governed, if its morals are good or bad, the quality of its music shall furnish forth the answers."

How do you think we're doing?

Visual Arts

When "you come to a full appreciation of art…you will be possessed of one of the purest, loftiest, and most ennobling pleasures the civilized world can offer you."

The learning objective for art studies is captured in this little experience of one of my storytelling friends:

"The first time I saw Raphael's *Disputa*, which decorates one of the walls in one of the rooms of the Vatican in Rome, I had set out with my guidebook, intending to study all the paintings by Raphael that decorate these rooms. I entered the first room and, I suppose looked around the other walls, seeing three other paintings, but all I recall during this visit was the *Disputa*. I sat down before it and remained seated! I do not know how long, but the morning slipped away. What I thought about as I looked at the picture I cannot tell you. My impression is that I did not think at all; I only felt. My spirit was lifted up and purified and strengthened with happiness. Returning to my hotel, I read about the picture in my guidebook. It appeared that one of the figures represented Dante. I had not noticed it; and as I read on, I noticed other things that I had missed; that indeed, the whole subject as far as it could be put into words had escaped me. I had no knowledge what the painting was about; only I had felt its beauty.

"Since then I have studied more about the picture and discovered some of the means Raphael employed to arouse this depth of feeling, and the knowledge has helped me to find beauty in other things."

My son described a similar experience on his last visit to

the National Art Gallery in Washington, D.C. He said he walked into a room and there was a small painting on the wall that so moved him, that he stood there for probably half an hour. It was not a well-known painting. It was a scene of a French café by an artist he had never heard of. He said he couldn't tell me what thoughts were going through his mind. He just stood in silence, wrapped in all the feelings the painting stirred up.

Now compare these experiences with art with the learning objectives I pulled off the Virginia State Standards list. These standards begin in the first grade:

"Demonstrate understanding of the elements of art: Color, form, line, shape, space, texture, value, balance, contrast, emphasis, movement, pattern, proportion, rhythm unity, variety. Identify, analyze and apply criteria.

"Students will examine works of art and make informed judgments about them based on established visual art criteria.

"Provide analytical skills to evaluate information that is conveyed through images and symbols."

Where is the part about opening children's eyes to see the beauty in all the world? Where is the lesson that teaches that true art communicates with the deeps of our souls; that Man becomes the thing he gazes upon, as Hawthorne taught in *The Great Stone Face*; that images are long lasting so be careful what images you impress on the heart.

I copied these words from one of the heart educators: "The heart and soul of the masterpiece, the sheer beauty of it, are considered least of all, and students end up heartily hating something they might have enjoyed and loved…. It is better to create a capacity to enjoy art than to have a technical knowledge of its pieces."

On the back of our book on paintings, I included the quote: "When we see ordinary things, we see only with our eyes, but, when we see works of art we see with our hearts."

The heart feels; it doesn't analyze and, in the end, it's the heart that shapes who we are.

Learning the rules of art before we have felt it is like being shown the secrets behind the magic tricks before we've felt the magic.

Childhood is for feeling the magic of art. Children love looking at pictures and it's the second language we can use to communicate to the heart of a child before he understands words. And it's a powerful and lasting language. We say "in one ear and out the other," but we don't say "in one eye and out the other."

Dr. Rich Melheim, who is working wonders using art-based education among children living in poverty around the world, wrote that "while the human ear can process 10,000 bits of information per second, the human eye can process up to 7 billion bits of information per second. Therefore, neurologically speaking, a picture is not worth a thousand words. It's worth 700,000 words."

The visual impressions made on a child's tender heart last a lifetime.

Before I get into how to help children feel the magic, I have a really sad story to tell you. The Snow Queen has struck the art world. If you go to modern art exhibits and find yourself scratching your head, you're not alone.

What if I said this to you?

Lavishly zyzzx the fo rof perpendicular

Did you get anything out of that? Each of those words means something to me, but I wanted to express them to you in my own way, so I threw out all the rules of grammar. In fact, I thought a couple of the words sounded better backwards. This is what happened in the art world. A hundred years ago, they threw out all the rules that had taken hundreds of years to discover and apply.

Just as had happened in music, by the mid 1800s, artists had discovered the greatest secrets and rules of art that made

it possible to communicate profound messages to human hearts instantly. You can take a work of art like this and show it to anyone anywhere in the world, no matter what the culture, no matter when they lived in history, and their hearts will instantly understand what this painting is saying.



Enlisted by William Henry Gore

It's entitled *Enlisted*. I felt the meaning of this painting before learning the red ribbon in the man's cap was the sign of an enlisted soldier. Any wife, mother, sister, lover, daughter, friend who has sent a soldier off to war knows the meaning of this painting. When it was first displayed, one of the foremost art critics of the day who was used to looking at works of art through an analytical eye, broke down and wept.

The intellectuals of the early 1900s, under the Snow Queen's reign, looked down on this kind of art as sentimental and unsophisticated. They despised storytelling in art. As a result, this whole body of art from around 1848 to 1920 was completely erased from all the university textbooks and from all the courses of art history in our schools. Museums put many of the paintings in storage.

Then a few years ago, a Fred Ross who holds a Master's of Art Education from Columbia University, stumbled upon a work of art by Bouguereau that moved him like no other work of art ever had. This is not the painting he saw, but is painted by the same artist.

He wrote: "Frozen in place, gawking with my mouth



Les Petites Mauraudes by
William-Adolphe Bouguereau

agape, cold chills careening up and down my spine, I was virtually gripped as if by a spell that had been cast. Years of undergraduate courses and another 60 credits post-graduate in art, and I had never heard Bouguereau's name. Who was he? Was he important? Anyone who could have done this must surely be deserving of the highest accolades to the world."

The experience led him on a search where he discovered these things I'm telling you. He has been working hard to restore what has been lost. If you go to artrenewal.org, you'll find the Art Renewal Center which is a treasure trove of fine art. There are over 80,000 high resolution images, primarily made up of this forgotten art. Look up his article on Why Classical Realism matters and read it. It's eye opening and may just change the way you think about art. And a lot of things about what's happening in the art world will make a lot more sense.



Pardon Mama by Emile Munier

Without this kind of art, I don't think we could work the magic with our children that I'm trying to describe. I went through all 80,000 images and

guess who I kept bumping into? Mother!

Although sometimes she was barefoot, she wasn't repressed, miserable or trapped;



May I Have One Too?
by Emile Munier



Maternal Admiration by
William-Adolphe Bouguereau

she was content, joyful;

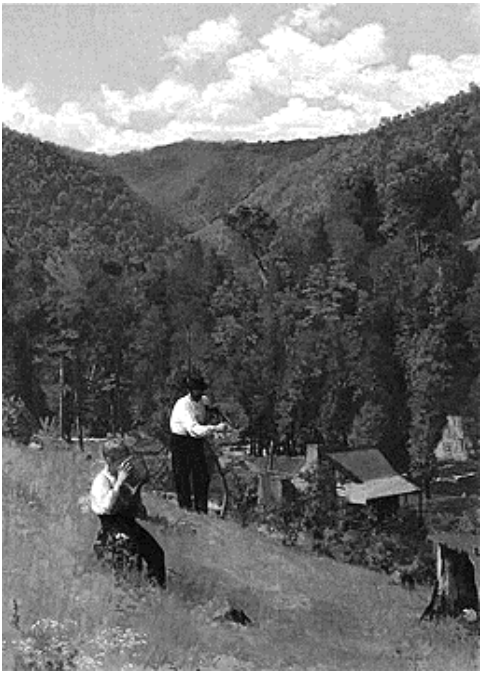


Falling Apple Blossoms by Hamilton



she was beautiful.

Mother with a Child by Frantisek Dvorak



The Farmer and His Son at Harvesting
By Thomas Pollock Anshutz

And I found Father. In the last 50 years, we've gone from Father Knows Best to Father Knows Nothing to Who Needs a Father. But here he was!

He was working hard to provide for his family.



A Welcome Home for Dad
by Frederick Morgan



In Daddy's Arms by Severin Nilsson

He was strong and protective. He was adored by his children.

I found brothers and sisters with their arms around each other.



A Little Coaxing by
William-Adolphe Bouguereau



Fishing for Frogs
William-Adolphe Bouguereau

I found families happily engaged in work and play.



Washing Day by Thomas Armitage

All over the world!
And I found dear, beautiful Mother Nature everywhere.



A Young Girl in a Field by Ludwig Knaus

I found fine art that brought scenes of history I had been studying, to life!



Cornelia Pointing to Her Children by Angelica Kauffman

If you want your children to grow up to value motherhood and fatherhood and family, let these be the images they see on the walls of your home. Let them be the last images they see before they go to bed and the first ones they see when they wake up in the morning. Hang a bulletin board by their beds

and change the images frequently. Show them images of these mothers smiling and playing with their children. Let them see the look of love on her face. Hang images representing the innocent and pure love between a man and a woman to counter the sex-saturated images bombarding them everywhere else. Who is creating art like this anymore?

We don't think twice about spending $500 or $1000 for a flat screen TV, but we balk at spending $300 on a piece of fine art that can influence the heart of a child for eternity. Do we worry more about matching the color of our couches than inspiring the heart of a child?

I didn't think much about the influence of what's hanging on my walls until one day, one of my daughters came home from a friend's house and was so excited about their new basement. She said it was unbelievably cool. They had posters from old movies and movie stars all over the wall and she said, "How come we can't have a cool house like that?" I need to interject here that I happen to love religious art and many of the rooms in our home have a scene from Jesus' life in it. She went on to say, "How can my friends talk about and do the things we like to do if Jesus is looking…at…us." Oh. She didn't have to say anything else and neither did I. The paintings stayed.

The paintings on our walls have a quiet influence in our homes. Find creative ways to use these pictures and make them part of your children's everyday life. I've picked up some beautiful volumes of art at library book sales. When I pay 50 cents for them, I don't feel badly having the art cut out of them to be pasted in notebooks and such. You might want to keep a lookout for them.

I know we all have personal preferences in art. I'm not an expert. Some of you will defend modern art to me. But I just can't see how a giant white canvas like the one that recently sold for a million dollars will tell much about us in a thousand years from now. Or, maybe, sadly it does! Big empty hearts

and big empty heads. But I know what touches my heart and as I have shared the art from this era with the moms in our Well-Educated Heart group, it has opened a layer of appreciation that wasn't there before. I have found this fine art lifts and ennobles and inspires me. So I pronounce it good.

Our ability to appreciate art depends much upon what is in our own hearts. As I talked about in the talk about imagination, a hard heart cannot appreciate art in the way being described here. An intellectual understanding will never open the door. As our tastes become more refined and cultured, our taste in art changes as well. As John Van Dyke said, "It will take years before you come to a full appreciation of art, but when at last you have it, you will be possessed of one of the purest, loftiest, and most ennobling pleasures that the civilized world can offer you."[8]

I can tell you how you can kill a love of fine art in your children. First, turn it into lessons. You do all the choosing. Schedule out a study of artists and stick to it. Be sure to require your children write about the art they are looking at and have them write up reports about the artists. Second, start from the very beginning to draw attention to the elements instead of allowing them to take in the whole. Third, find fine art that has no connection to anything familiar in their lives. Fourth, schedule a visit to a museum. Be sure you have printed worksheets with learning objectives in hand and insist they complete them before they go out to play.

If these things will kill a love of fine art, doing the opposite will cultivate a love. Let art be spontaneous in your home. Leave art books around the house to be enjoyed without compulsion. Find ways, as we've talked about, to display fine art on your walls—even your refrigerator. Share art you love with your children. Remember—the deeps of the heart are silent. The feelings art stirs within us are not easily, nor should they,

[8] John Van Dyke, *How to Judge a Picture* (1889).

be translated into words. Let whatever words are used come naturally, without compulsion. And most frequently, they will come out in oral rather than written expression.

Isn't it simply miraculous that we have access to so much fine art with which to feed our hearts? Your children are looking upon fine art images that were reserved for royalty, for the aristocracy, the few. Almost all of the art mentioned in the old books which are usually reproduced in black and white can easily be pulled up in a Google search, but sometimes I can't find a color version. It wasn't until I saw the movie *Monuments Men* that I realized some of these paintings may have been among those that were destroyed by Hitler and Nazi Germany, which makes a knowledge of them even more valuable. By the way, if you haven't see that movie yet, I highly recommend it. The movie itself isn't perfect, but its message about art is powerful.

Of course the images do not have the same impact as the actual art itself. Do visit museums and since you will have made friends with so many works of art and artists, your children will feel like they are at home with friends. Every time I visit a museum, the first painting in a room I am drawn to is the familiar one. And to see it close up often takes my breath away. I've seen the image of Washington crossing the Delaware hundreds of times—but nothing compares with seeing the larger than life original full wall version.

It has been said: "There is only one way to improve the taste of a nation. It cannot be done in a hurry and it cannot be done by force. It can only be accomplished by exposing the people patiently to that which is truly "good"; to that which is truly "noble."

This you will do in your fine art studies.

With that, I'll leave you with my final thought for this talk, courtesy of Charles Kingsley:

"Never lose an opportunity to see anything beautiful. Beauty is God's handwriting."

The Angelus

Adapted from Maud Menefee



The Angelus by Jean-Francois Millet

Every evening after sunset, when the most wonderful soft light is in the sky and it is very still everywhere, the old bell in the steeple chimes out over the village in the fields around. No one quite knows what the evening bell sings, but the tone is so beautiful, everyone stands still and listens.

Ever since the oldest grandfather can remember, the dear bell has sung at evening and everyone has listened and listened for the message.

A great many people said, "There is no message at all." And one very learned man wrote a whole book to show that the song of the evening bell was nothing but the clanging of brass and iron, and almost everyone who read it, believed it. But there were many who were not wise enough to read so they listened to the sweet tone, just as lovingly as they had listened when they were little children.

Sometimes when the sweet song peeled out, the old shoemaker would forget and leave his thread half drawn. And while he listened, a wonderful smiling light shone in his face. But whenever the little grandson asked him what the bell said to him, the old man only shook his head and pulled the stitch through and sewed on and on until there was not any more light.

And for this reason, the little boy began to think that the bell was singing something about work. He thought of it very often when he sat on his grandfather's step listening to the song and watching the people.

Sometimes those who had read the learned book spoke together and laughed quite loudly to show that they were not paying any attention to the bell. And there were others who seemed not to hear it at all. But there were some who listened, just as the old grandfather had listened. And many who stopped and bowed their heads and stood quite still for a long, long while.

But the strangest was that no one could tell the other what the bell had sung to him. It was really a very deep mystery.

Now there was a painter who had such loving eyes that even when he looked on homely, lowly things, he saw wonder that no one else could see. He loved all the sweet mysteries that are in the world. And he loved the bell's song. He wondered about it, just as the little boy had done.

One evening, I think, he went alone beyond the village and through the wide, brown fields. He saw the light in the

sky and the birds going home and the steeple far off. It was all very still and wonderful. And as he looked away on every side, thinking many holy thoughts, he saw a man and a woman working together in the dim light. They were digging potatoes. There was a wheelbarrow beside them and a basket. Sometimes they moved about slowly or stooped with their hands in the brown earth. And while they worked, the song of the evening bell came faintly to them. When they heard it, they rose up. The mother folded her hands on her breast and said the words of a prayer and thought of her little ones. The father just held his hat in his hand and looked down at their work. And the painter forgot all the wonder of the sky and wide field as he looked at them. For there was a deeper mystery. And it was plain to him. But the man and the woman stood there listening. They did not know that the bell was singing to them of their very own work; of every loving service and lowly task of the day.

The bell sang on and on. And the peace of the song seemed to fill the whole day.

Poetry

"The soldier fights for his native land but the poet touches that land with the charm that makes it worth fighting for…"

Some years ago, my husband and I became friends with an elderly resident of a retirement center. Grant was in his nineties. We helped with the church services on Sundays and he would shuffle to the meeting room every week with his little Edna on his arm. Grant was a frail looking man with stooped shoulders and I don't think Edna even reached five feet tall. After he seated her, he would pull a comb out of one pocket and tenderly comb her hair, and then reach in his other pocket and pull out a little bow that he would carefully put in place. Then he'd lick his fingers so he could pat down the stray hairs.

Grant had every reason to despair. He couldn't see or hear well. Their only child, a daughter, had died when she was just a young woman. Edna had been suffering the effects of Alzheimers for many years. It had been a long time since she had recognized him and she rarely spoke any words. He was her primary care giver and they lived in one of the independent living apartments.

But he held a treasure in his heart. From the time he was a child, he memorized poetry and would keep dozens of poems refreshed and alive at all times. He was often called upon to recite a poem, and when he would stand, his pale blue eyes would suddenly light up and his voice would become strong and vibrant as he shared beautiful words by heart.

My husband and I went to visit him one night in his apart-

ment. He told us he was so very, very tired, but when I asked if he had a poem for us, his eyes brightened and away he went:

Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night
Sailed off in a wooden shoe–
Sailed on a river of crystal light
Into a sea of dew.
"Where are you going, and what do you wish"
The old moon asked the three.
"We have come to fish for the herring fish
The lives in the beautiful sea;
Nets of silver and gold have we!"
Said Wynken, Blynken and Nod.

He went on to recite all the verses and I asked him if this was a poem from his childhood. He said, "Oh, no. This is what I have been working on for the last several weeks."

Poetry is how a lonely, tired man kept his heart from failing. This was his "jewel" of life that gave him joy in times of sorrow.

"So shut your eyes while mother sings
Of wonderful sights that be.
And you shall see the beautiful things
As you rock in the misty sea."

He passed away just a few days later and Edna followed shortly thereafter. I will forever carry with me the lesson he taught me of the power of storing up treasures of poetry.

Abraham Lincoln, in the darkest days of the war, lost his much loved little boy to a sudden illness. A few days later, a senator found Lincoln, secluded in a room by himself, his head bowed, with a book of Shakespeare open on his lap, drawing comfort from the words of Constance who had also lost a young son:

My Lord, my boy,
my young son.
My life, my joy, my food,

My all the world.
My sorrow's cure.

Grief fills up the room of my absent son
Lies in his bed;
walks up and down with me.

Oh, Father, Cardinal,
I have heard you say
I shall see and know my friends in heaven.
If that be true,
I shall see my boy again.

As I read the stories of personal sacrifice and loss I've included in our World War I volume, I found myself returning over and over again to a poem that previously had little meaning to me, but now captured what my heart was feeling:

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
    In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
    In Flanders fields.

Poetry combines imagery with the rhythm of music. A poet can carry a message to a place deep in the heart with just a few words that a scholar can't reach in 10,000 words.

Poetry is painting with words. It seems to have fallen out

of favor today. In our hectic ever-rushing noisy world, poetry requires us to slow down and feel. The meaning cannot be sensed by the literal mind; it requires a heart comfortable with imagery.

Many people develop a distaste for it by having its technicalities explained before feeling the sheer beauty of the words. Andrew Lang in his book of poetry wrote: "The child does not want everything to be explained; in the unexplained is great pleasure. Nothing, perhaps, crushes the love of poetry more surely and swiftly than the use of poems as school books. They are at once associated in the mind with lessons, with long, endless hours in school, with puzzling questions and the agony of an imperfect memory, with grammar and etymology, and everything that is an enemy of joy. We may cause children to hate Shakespeare or Spenser…by inflicting poets on them, not for their poetry, but for the valuable information in the notes."

In children's books 100 years ago, no matter what the subject was, the writers inserted lines of poetry everywhere—on the title page, on blank dividing pages, at the beginning and ending of chapters and within the text itself. It was almost as if they were saying, "Look, I've explained this concept to your mind; now I want your heart to understand."

> O poet, what power lies in thy magic wand!
> No sooner dost thou touch us, the dull gray day
> is aflame with color and sunshine.

Poetry is meant to be read aloud to capture the music and enhance the impression. You can't skim through poetry and have it make any lasting impression.

Mother Goose rhymes are a wonderful way to introduce poetry to children. One of my storytelling friends said that when you use Mother Goose, "You are developing ear, mind and heart, and laying a foundation for a later love of the best things in poetry." Or in other words, "If you wish your child

to love Homer, give him Mother Goose." Another one wrote, "Children are hardly ever too young to delight in the mere beauty of words…in the music of metre and rhyme, even when the meaning is perhaps still obscure." Mother Goose rhymes are simple enough to share "by heart." Keep a full reservoir of them. Your children will just naturally pick them up and start reciting them "by heart" themselves.

If you missed out on Mother Goose rhymes as a child, learn them as an adult. To recite a rhyme by heart is far more effective with little children than trying to make them sit still while you read to them from a book. And you'll get lots of mileage out of every one of them because children this age love repeating familiar things. You'll get to repeat them over and over and over…and over and over and over again.

I've read some articles lately that suggest it's possible that the rise of attention deficit disorders in some of our children may be traced back to the neglect of nursery rhymes that lend so well to creating order and focus in the brain at this critical developmental stage.

I've picked up some wonderful books of poetry for children at library sales or used book sites with beautiful illustrations. There doesn't seem to be a real call for them anymore and you'll likely find some real treasures. Create a shelf full of poetry books that is somewhere your children will have quick access.

A childhood of beautiful poetry will prepare hearts to feel at home with the great poets like Homer, Shakespeare, and Milton; Tennyson, Wordsworth and so many others who require that we be comfortable with imagery and who offer us one of the highest forms of literary experience, with multi-faceted layers of rich meaning and understanding. And what that translates into is more joy and satisfaction for you and your children.

As you share poetry with your children, anticipate words that may not have a clear meaning to them. One day I was

sharing a story with a little granddaughter who was four or five at the time. I told her how, from the time I was a little girl, I dreamed of playing the harp. But it was more than forty years before I finally owned my very own. I loved that harp. Every time I walked by it in the living room, I practically pinched myself to think I really, truly had a harp! I loved to play it. And then one day her grandpa, my husband, got very sick. For a long time he couldn't work. It was about the time her mom was getting ready to marry her dad and I didn't have any money to pay for her wedding and I wanted her to have a pretty wedding dress. So I decided to sell my harp. It made me cry, but it also made me happy because I told her I loved her mom more than I loved my harp.

My little granddaughter was very quiet while she listened to me tell this story. A little later she came back with a picture she had colored with crayons. There I was, sitting in a little boat out in the middle of a lake, with tears running down my cheeks. And on the other end of the boat was my harp, acting as the sail. I was sailing my harp.

Now, I treasure that little picture. It was the sweetest gift, but it serves as a reminder to me that I need to be careful with little children that what I am describing is the same as what is being imagined. It makes me think of another little boy who kept begging his mother to tell him the poem about a little boy who gets sick and throws up a ribbon. She couldn't for the life of her figure out what the poem was until she read "The Night Before Christmas" and got to the part where he tore open the shutters and "threw up the sash."

Moving on to another thought, I read a recent study where volunteers agreed to sit in a room, alone for fifteen minutes. The room was stark bare; no pictures to look at, no magazines lying around. They also had to agree to not take any electronics in the room with them.

Can you guess how many minutes it took before they started going absolutely stir crazy? The average time was five

minutes. They kept reaching for phones that weren't there. It was just them, alone, with their thoughts. And for most of them, there weren't many thoughts to keep themselves company.

Now contrast that with a group of prisoners Victor Frankl observed in the Nazi death camps. At peril of losing their lives, they gathered together to recite poetry, improvise plays and sing songs, which were forbidden. It was how they survived.

How true are these words of Marie Antoinette, who knew loneliness as few of us will ever know: "What a resource amid the casualties of life is a well-cultivated mind! One can then be one's own companion and find society in one's own thoughts."

How would you or your children fare, left alone with your thoughts?

The objective is not to see how many poems we can pour through our children; it's to see how many we can help them hold on to.

Our brains have a tremendous capacity for memorization. Prospective students at a leading university in Turkey hundreds of years ago were required to demonstrate that they had memorized the entire Koran to even be considered for admittance. For hundreds and even thousands of years, before written language, the history of nations was passed from generation to generation in ballads committed to memory. Their genealogies were kept the same way. Were it not for the ballads, awareness of many of the people and events of the olden days would have vanished long ago.

But most of us have allowed our brains to become very flabby. We know we can look up anything on the internet, so we don't train ourselves to remember. Helping our children memorize poetry strengthens that memory muscle. Our memory skills diminish as we age. Take advantage of this prime time for memory work.

Little children need to be taught concentration and poetry is one of the best means. Memorizing poetry fosters the habit of attention that will reach into all other aspects of learning.

And remember what I said about the vital importance of oral expression? That the secret of the Greek's artistic nature lies in the fact that they had their children spend their time in poetic recitation rather than in writing exercises. But be mindful, you can certainly kill a love of it by assigning and forcing it.

Read poetry every day. Invite your children to choose favorites they want to work on memorizing. And one of the best ways to help children love poetry is to encourage them to create their own anthology of favorite poems. That goes for you, too.

You can call your Poetry notebook whatever you like, but I like the word "Gem" because it describes something that is very small, but is very valuable and lasts a long time. Poems are small but are of great worth. The first notebook you should organize, if you don't have one already, is your very own. Let your children see you copying favorite poems with cursive handwriting and decorating the pages to add to its pleasure, it you like. Read to them from your book of Poetry Gems.

For your child, the Poetry anthology he creates not only will become a lifelong treasure, it serves as a first reading book and also a means of practicing, first printing, and then cursive handwriting in a meaningful and enjoyable way. They will want to include their very best work and it will become a source of pride to show grandparents and aunts and uncles and others.

A 3-ring binder is a good first option because a child can create individual pages and add them as he goes along. If he makes a mistake, it's not hard to throw the page away and create another one as opposed to starting with a bound journal or a bare book where the pages are all intact.

For a toddler who isn't reading yet, you could glue pictures

from Mother Goose rhymes that will trigger a rhyme he's familiar with. You can shop thrift stores to look for illustrated Mother Goose books that you won't mind cutting up. Or you can print out images from the old Mother Goose books we've linked online in the online library for young children. So now, when he sees the picture of a clock with the mouse running up it, he recites the rhyme associated with it.

I started a Poetry Gem book with a little granddaughter who is just learning to read while I was helping my daughter with a new baby. I had her pick a nursery rhyme and then had her show me where she wanted me to write it on the page. I wrote the words as she dictated them to me, and then I had her read them with me as I pointed to each word. Then she took the page and illustrated it. We punched three holes in it and put it in her 3-ring binder. After a couple of days, her little four-year-old sister wanted to do the same thing, so we started hers as well—the power of the heart seeing something happening. If I had required her to color a page, I doubt she would have been interested. Not only was she feeling the delight of the poetry itself, I accomplished several lessons with this simple little activity: I demonstrated that words can be written out. I showed left to right. I was giving her heart a chance to watch the act of writing play out. I could tell that Emma, the four-year-old, was watching carefully how I drew circles and lines to form the letters. I was giving her something to imitate. A book of poems like this can become a very personal first "reading" book. One of my daughters had a first grade teacher who taught them to read entirely from poetry pages they recited and illustrated.

As a child starts learning to write, copying poems that she is memorizing can provide copy work to practice handwriting, even if she just starts with just one or two words a day. The pages can continue to be illustrated or decorated with designs or stickers. Little children love cutting paper, so why not have them cut out pictures from old magazines to keep in a box

that can be used to decorate their poetry pages. Cutting out pictures is one of the activities you can have your children do while you're reading stories to them to keep their hands busy and thereby hold interest longer.

Eventually, as your child matures, encourage the use of cursive handwriting to copy all the poems they are memorizing or are including in their anthology of favorite poems. Yes, it may be easier to print them off the computer. But the very act of cursive writing connects parts of the brain and deepens the whole process that wouldn't happen if you just type in the words. Encourage your children to memorize scriptures or passages of Shakespeare or great quotes as they get older and add them to their Gems notebook. And how do you encourage them? By letting their hearts see you do it.

As I said before, these poetry books can become a lifelong treasured possession—sort of a scrap book of worthy thoughts.

I was reading poetry before I went to bed the other night and ran across a poem I hadn't seen for more than fifty years. But as I read the first lines, a whole scene opened up to my memory of my childhood room, and the dusky sunlight that filtered across my bed as I heard the poem as a child. And my mother was there. I don't even have words to describe to you the experience, except to say that it was pure joy. This was the poem, called Velvet Shoes:

Let us walk in the white snow
  In a soundless space;
With footsteps quiet and slow,
  At a tranquil pace,
  Under veils of white lace.

I shall go shod in silk,
  And you in wool,
White as a white cow's milk,
  More beautiful
  Than the breast of a gull.

We shall walk through the still town
In a windless peace;
We shall step upon white down,
Upon silver fleece.
Upon softer than these.

We shall walk in velvet shoes:
Wherever we go
Silence will fall like dews
On white silence below.
We shall walk in the snow.

This poem is definitely worthy of my poetry gems book.

Poetry Tea Times have become popular with families where you put a nice tablecloth on the table, pick some flowers if you have some, and pull out your nicest china tea set. Enjoy some delicious treats and some hot cocoa or other drink while you share poetry with each other, preferably poems that are being memorized, but certainly reading them aloud from books works, too.

I've had some moms say, but I have boys! You'll be surprised—poetry isn't just for girls. And especially consider how many of the great poets were men!

Did you watch the *Dead Poet Society* with Robin Williams? You will probably remember the words from this scene:

"We don't read and write poetry because it's cute. We read and write poetry because we are members of the human race and the human race is filled with passion. Medicine, Law, business and Engineering—these are noble pursuits necessary to sustain life, but poetry, beauty, romance, love, these are what we stay alive for."

And now we're to the end of another talk. So let me end with this thought:

The stories of history teach us that when a people have lost their heroic spirit; when their hearts have grown cold; it's not the scholar or the scientist who fans the flame again. It's always the poet—a Thomas Moore in Ireland or a Lord Alfred

Tennyson in England—who rises up and breathes new life and plants new hearts in nations. So I'll leave you with a question I jotted down from my readings:

Art thou the poet that shall save the world?

Story

"Storytelling is an ageless and beautiful art. When the lights are low and your child is in a quiet, reflective mood, the stories told him will never be forgotten and their influence will follow him the rest of his life."

Mary King threw the strand of pearls on her bed, her eyes blazing with anger. "My mother! My stupid, stupid mother! How can she do this to me?" Tomorrow was her graduation from high school and she had spent the day at the lake with her friends. They had each told about the presents their parents had bought them for graduation. How could she face them and tell them she had been given this old string of beads?

And that wasn't the worst of it. While her friends had all been out shopping with their moms for new outfits to wear, her mom had handsewn a plain, simple dress and now she expected her to wear this necklace with it. It was just humiliating.

As Mary dressed for bed, she noticed an envelope on the top of her dresser. It was from Mr. Morse. Mr. Morse had been like a father to Mary. She and her mother had lived in his home for as long as she could remember. He had often given her gifts. "At least I bet there's a check in here," she thought to herself.

But as she tore open the envelope, there was no check. Just a long letter.

Mary sat on her bed and started to read.

> Dear Mary,
> I had planned on giving you a check for your

graduation, but that can come later. I was at the lake a couple of days ago when you were there with your friends and I couldn't help but overhear what you were saying to them. You wished your mother's face was pretty like your friends' mothers instead of all red and cross looking. You wished her hair was thick and curly like theirs instead of thin and stringy. And you complained about how embarrassing it was to go anywhere with her because her one foot dragged a little when she walked and you thought it made people stare.

That's when I knew that what you needed more than a check, was a story.

Mary rolled her eyes. "Has everyone gone crazy around here?" But she continued to read.

Many years ago, a young couple moved into town. Everyone loved them and they could tell how much they loved each other. The bride was so pretty and had such a bright smile that everyone was drawn to her. But being in a small town, it wasn't long until the townspeople came to know their story.

The husband was the son of a wealthy mill owner in a nearby city in eastern Pennsylvania. His father had picked out the girl he thought his son should marry. She was from one of the other prominent, rich families. When his son refused and insisted on marrying this other girl, the father disowned him; told him he'd never get another cent from him.

The two moved to a nearby town to start a new life. The husband hadn't ever had to work before and wasn't used to hard labor, but he willingly grabbed any job that would take him. And she worked hard, too. Bit by bit they saved enough money to build a little house on the hill, and they were very happy.

Then one day there was an accident. The scaffolding the husband was standing on collapsed beneath him. His coworkers carried his bruised and

bleeding body to their little home and laid him on the bed. That very night a little girl was born to them. Oh, how he fought to live for that little girl, but after a short time, he was gone.

The father-in-law, still bitter at the girl because he blamed her for taking his son away from him, sent word that he would take the child and raise her as his own. She would lack for nothing, only the mother was never to have contact with her again.

The mother sent back word: "I love her too much. I will find a way to provide for her."

And she did. She continued to work every job that came her way. Eventually she was offered a position as a teacher of young children. The job included room and board at the school for her and her little daughter. And they were very happy there.

Then, one day, when the little girl was about 3, the mother was downstairs reading a book when she heard a cry that struck terror in her heart. "Fire! Fire in the west wing!" That's where her little girl was! She threw down the book and flew up the stairs, two and three stairs at a time. By the time she reached the third landing, the smoke was curling down the hall from the bedrooms. She dropped to the ground and felt her way through the smoke.

Minutes passed when firefighters on the main floor saw a figure stumble down the stairs. Her face, hands and feet were badly burned. All her hair was gone. In her arms she was carrying a bundle wrapped in a quilt, and from her hand dangled a strand of pearls. "I'm badly hurt," she whispered, "but I have rescued my two greatest treasures. Please keep them safe for me," and she collapsed to the ground.

For weeks she writhed in agony. No one expected her to live. But she was fighting to live for that little girl. Slowly, she started to heal. And then one day word came to her again from the father-in- law: Give me the child and I will raise her as my own. She will

lack for nothing. Again word was sent back: I love the child too much. I will find a way.

Mr. Morse continued.

That's when I stepped in. I built a large home far enough away from the town so that no one would know what had happened and you and your mother have lived here ever since. I have watched your mother find work to do with her hands, even though they were stiff and painful to use. Many a time I passed her room and found her on her knees pleading for strength. I watched her carefully save every penny so that you could go to college.

I wanted to tell you these things, but she made me promise to never tell you. She said it would kill her to have your pity. She wanted you to love her just for who she was. But when I heard you talking to your friends like that, I just couldn't keep silent any longer. Now you must never tell her that I have told you.

Sincerely,
A.E. Morse

Mary sat in stunned silence. And then hot tears started flowing down her cheeks. How could she have been so selfish? All this time, she thought it was Mr. Morse that was sending her to college. No, it was her mother. All those times that she was embarrassed that her mother always wore the same home-made dress; she was saving for her.

Dear God, please forgive me, she whispered.

She now heard her mother's familiar shuffle coming towards her room. Somehow it didn't annoy her this time. Her mother knocked on the door.

"Mary, is everything OK?"

Mary remembered her promise to not let her mother know she knew, so she hurried to wipe the tears from her face.

"Oh, come on in! I guess it's just the excitement of the

graduation and everything tomorrow…. Mother…the pearls. They're beautiful. Have you had them long?"

"Oh, yes. I've had them for many years. Your father gave them to me. He had to work so hard to earn them. I love every pearl on that string. I saved them for you once in the long ago because I wanted you to have something that he had earned for us."

Mary could hardly speak. She gently wrapped her arms around her mother and held her close as she whispered, "Truly, I have the most beautiful mother in all the world."

It was more than 60 years ago that I heard this story. I couldn't have been more than seven or eight years old. It made such an impression on my heart that every time I saw a pearl necklace, it made me think of this story. I remember clearly the little book my Sunday School teacher read it from. In fact, every time I saw a similar little book of stories, I would open it up looking for the story again.

I'm going to come back to this story of the pearls, but I want to push a little pause button to share an experience I had while I was working on the Forgotten Classics Family Library I have told you about. I learned so many things I had never known before and was anxious to share them with families. But I ran into a problem. How do you make old books with no pictures appeal to children who aren't reading so much anymore; who are used to flashy video games and entertainment? I knew the rich, beautiful language they used could be a barrier to many children.

I pondered over this for many months. And then one day when I was out in Utah visiting my mother, I was heading out the door to go out to dinner when I had a feeling that I can best describe as how you feel when someone walks up to you and says, excitedly, "Come here for a minute. I want to show you something."

So I slipped downstairs to get on to the computer for a minute and went on Internet Archive where I spend most of

my time. I said out loud, "I don't know what I'm looking for!" and then a keyword came into my mind that I entered in. A long list of books came up and I started scrolling through them until I came to one title that seemed to jump out at me. It wasn't a particularly interesting title; it was *The Use of Story in Religious Education* by Margaret Eggleston. I started reading and immediately knew this was the answer I was looking for. Before I went to bed that night, I discovered there had been a revival in the art of storytelling about a hundred years ago for the very purpose I was looking for—to warm and open up the hearts of children so they want to learn more. I found a whole circle of warm-hearted storytellers and educators who started teaching me how to reach the hearts of children.

Opportunities started coming to me to share what I was learning and as I taught about restoring the art of storytelling in our homes, I found the stories that I most often told and that made the deepest impressions were Margaret Eggleston's, such as this one:

One day Margaret went to visit a friend and when she walked in the front door, she could hear her friend's six-year-old son, John, upstairs kicking, and screaming and throwing things. The mother explained that he had disobeyed her one time too many and had been sent up to his room without his supper. Margaret asked if she could go upstairs and see if there was something she could do. The mother didn't think it would do any good but agreed to let her try.

As she entered the bedroom, she found John curled up in a heap at the foot of the bed. He didn't even look up at her. She sat herself down on the floor and proceeded to say, "I think I'll tell you a story. You needn't listen of course. Away up in the far north where it is very, very cold, there lived a little boy who had a sled. Now, he didn't pull this sled with a rope. Oh, no. He hitched it up to four little dogs and how they would fly over the snow." By this time, John was facing her and had stopped kicking.

Slowly and quietly, the storyteller unfolded the story of little Jimmy Standby of Labrador who had stood by the dogs all through the night and the day in the bitter cold because he had promised Dr. Grenfell he would stand by. As the story progressed, John crept closer and closer to her until he had crawled up in her lap, his face eagerly looking into her face as he followed Jimmy Standby to the very end.

When Margaret stood up to leave, John said, "Please, will you ask my mother if I can come downstairs for just a moment? There is something I need to tell her." After some coaxing, the mother agreed and John, with his dirt-streaked little red face, came down the stairs and walking right up to his mother said, "She has told me a nice story and I want you to know I'm going to have a name like his. I'm going to be Jimmy Standby, too."

And he walked upstairs like a man.

When Margaret was asked if storytelling really made a difference, she answered the question with this story:

One day she told a story to a group of adolescent boys among whom was a sort of rebel. She didn't think he was paying any attention to the story. It was a story of a young boy who had a job sweeping up a bank at closing time. As he went to empty one of the trash cans, he noticed a large roll of money that had accidentally been thrown away. As he held it in his hands, he thought how much this money would mean to his family. His father was a drunk who spent most of what he earned on drinking. The little bit of money this boy brought home went toward food for his little crippled sister and his mother who was very ill. The doctor had told him that if he didn't find a way to get medicine for his mother and move her out to the country where she could get fresh air, she probably wouldn't live past the fall.

He looked around and saw that no one had noticed him, so he slipped the money in his pants pocket and headed home. Along the way, the money felt heavier and heavier in his

pocket. He moved it first to his outside jacket pocket and then to the inside pocket. But the closer he got to home, the heavier the money felt until he at last realized he just couldn't keep the money.

He headed back to the bank where a security guard let him in. He marched straight to the bank president's office, knocked on the door, walked in and threw the money across the desk to the president, explaining how he had come by it. The president looked surprised. "Son," he said, "I know how much this money would mean to you and your mother. No one knew you had it. Why did you bring it back?" Without hesitating, the boy leaned across the desk, and looking straight into the eyes of the president said, "Sir, as long as I live, I have to live with myself and I don't want to live with a thief."

That was the story. There had been no particular reaction to it and Margaret lost contact with this young man until years later when she received a letter from him. He was now a soldier fighting on the war front in France. As she opened it, she read, "Years ago on a wet and rainy day when the ice was dangerous on the sidewalk, you came and told a story to a group of boys. I don't remember the details of the story, but I remember how it ended: 'As long as I live, I have to live with myself and I don't want to live with a thief.' That one story has kept me from lying and stealing and from being a coward. And here in France, it has kept me true to my manhood. I have a class here in the barracks—I know that may be hard to believe—some of my men need that story. I want it for all of them for all that I am, I owe to that one story and I thank you from the bottom of my heart."

There was another story Margaret told that I loved, but there was something about the story—I couldn't put my finger on it—something I was understanding just wasn't right. She had reluctantly included it in the final chapter of her book. Although she had told the story several times, it was of such a personal nature that she didn't feel comfortable putting

it out there for just anyone to read. Yet, she felt she should include it.

She had happened to step into a Sunday School class one day where the young men in the class had been grilling the teacher. Does anyone really know there is a God? He had exhausted all his answers but had not satisfied them. Margaret looked into their sincere and eager faces and said, "Boys, yes, I do know there is a God. If you'll come back next week I'll tell you how I know."

The next week all the boys were there plus a few extra as she unfolded this story:

Some years previous, her father, as I understood, had been diagnosed with a serious illness. The doctor said he needed to be out in the fresh country air, undisturbed by anyone or anything. He needed quiet. It was decided that they would head to a campsite in Maine where she had already spent several summers. They took with them "a little girl of seven." I wasn't sure who she was; maybe a little sister or a helper.

Over the next several weeks, the father seemed to be doing a little better. The flowers were in full bloom and they picked fresh blackberries that grew in abundance in the hills around them. And then one day, he took a turn for the worse. The doctor was sent for from the nearest town 20 miles away. He left them with some medicine and went on his way. It seemed to give some relief and they had all gone to sleep when Margaret heard some noise at the flap of the tent. The doctor had returned. He quickly explained that the blood work had shown there was a poison that had spread throughout the system of the sick one and the medicine he had left wouldn't do any good. It was a very serious situation. The doctor gave her new medicine and told her she would have to administer it every 15 minutes throughout the night. But even with that, he said death could come at any moment. He could only stay a little while because he had other patients to tend to.

Margaret stood at the opening of the tent and watched

his lamp fade away into the forest. And she was alone again.

She began to administer the medicine as she had been instructed. In between dosages, she tried to write letters, but her hands were shaking too much. She tried to read, but she couldn't concentrate. It was now the middle of the night. She stood at the opening of the tent, wrapping both hands around the pole, bracing herself against the night breeze. For the first time in her life, she was afraid. Really afraid.

The moon shone on the lake before her and reflected on the hills on the opposite shore. As she looked out into the stillness of that scene, the same words that came to the Psalmist came to her mind: "I will lift mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord who made heaven and earth. The Lord is thy keeper. The Lord shall preserve thee." The words came again, only this time she repeated them softly, aloud. "I will lift mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help." But this time as she spoke the words, a peace and a comfort filled her whole soul and the fear completely left her. She felt strengthened to face the hard things.

Finally, the morning broke and death had passed them by.

After a pause, she quietly said, "Boys, that's why I know there is a God."

And they were satisfied.

Well, remember how I said I have been looking for the story of the pearls for over 50 years? A couple of years ago I happened to be in a thrift store and I found a little book of stories. I opened it, and there it was! I was so excited to find it that I stood in the aisle and read it right there. It was exactly as I had remembered. What I didn't expect and what caught me completely by surprise was that at the end of the story, it said, "by Margaret Eggleston."

Shortly after I had found the story again, I was invited to our church's Girls Camp. They wanted me to come after dark when the girls were gathered around the campfire and tell

them a story. You can guess the story I told them. It got me thinking about Margaret Eggleston again and after I told the story, I wondered if she had any other books of stories. I looked and found she had another book published in 1921—the year after her first book. It was called *Fireside Stories to Tell to Teenage Girls*.

And then I glanced through the titles of stories and there was my story of the pearls! I smiled at the coincidence that I had just told a story in a campsite to teenage girls that Margaret had specifically written to be told at the campsite to a group of teenage girls.

Well, more months passed by as I continued working on my project. And I had one of those moments when you've been working hard on something and you pause for a minute and reflect on what you have accomplished. I had now filled nearly 60 volumes of stories of all sorts from this wonderful Golden age of children's literature. I had also selected and organized an online library for families from the same literature and had over 2000 books available. I had spent several months going through my stacks of notes, trying to organize what I had been learning about reaching the hearts of our children so I could share it with others and had recorded over several hours of audios that we posted online.

I thought about how much my own life had been enriched by spending so much time with all these stories and storytellers. I can't even begin to describe the joy that has come into my own life, and I have been filled with so much hope.

And my thoughts turned to Margaret. I thought, "Margaret, you are the one who opened the door to all of this for me and introduced me to all your friends." I was so grateful to her. I pulled her book from the shelf, *The Use of Story in Religious Education* and started to re-read it. Knowing what I now knew, I appreciated even more the depth of her wisdom. I could feel the goodness of her soul. And I found myself wondering, "Margaret, who are you? What do you look like?"

I searched and searched online to learn anything about her and couldn't find anything at all; only a birth year, that she had been born in 1878. I told my husband how disappointed I was that I couldn't find anything about her, and he suggested I get on a site that has a lot of public records available. He does a lot of family history and thought I might be able to find out something about her that way.

I never knew before how many Margaret Egglestons there are in the world, and I didn't know how I was going to find her. I went back to her book for clues. On the title page, it said she was a teacher at Boston University and she dedicated the book to her little daughter. In 1920, when she wrote it, she would have been 42 so I assumed she must have had only one child because you wouldn't single out one child if you had others, would you?

Using those clues, we found her in Boston in the 1920 census. She was living with her widowed mother, Elizabeth White, age 72 and her 13-year-old daughter who I noted would have been born around 1907. What I was sad to learn was that Margaret was also a widow. What happened?

We found her again in the 1910 census. She was living in Brooklyn, Kings County, New York. Her husband, Gurdon Eggleston, was a clergyman and they had a little 3-year-old daughter. So now I knew I was looking for a death certificate of Gurdon between 1910 and 1920. We found one in 1914, but it said that he died in Stoneham, Oxford. I told my husband that I didn't think that was him because, wasn't that England? My husband said to hold on and he said, no, Stoneham, Oxford is in Maine. I pulled out a map and found Oxford. It sits at the northern tip of a lake, about 20 miles from the nearest large town.

Suddenly I realized what I had missed in the previous story. She had worded it so that I wasn't clear who the people were in the story. She referred to the father of her family, and I assumed it was her father. Now I knew it wasn't her father

at all. It was her husband. The little girl of seven was their little girl. This was the story of how she faced the loss of her own husband and the story became even more meaningful to me because I, also, had a husband who faced a serious illness. I wasn't alone out in the wilds of Maine, but I felt just as alone. I knew well the fear that overtakes you in the dark hours of the middle of the night. I, too, had felt that comfort and peace pour into me that gave me the strength to face the hard things. Only my husband had been restored to health. She had to say good-bye to hers. In the story, it said death passed by for the time, but evidently not for long as the death certificate said he passed away in the middle of the summer on July 31, 1914, just before his 36th birthday. The cause of death was a cerebral hemorrhage from a brain tumor. His occupation was still clergyman.

What more could her stories teach me about her, I wondered. I returned to the Fireside book I had only quickly scanned through before. Now I read carefully. The first story was about May—with an M—who had been told by the doctor in the spring that her father was very ill and she needed to take him somewhere it was quiet and they wouldn't be disturbed. She took him to a little cabin in New Hampshire. As winter approached and she became fearful, she went to the lake and was strengthened as she looked to the hills from whence cometh her strength. The details of the story had been changed, but I clearly recognized it as her own true story.

Then it hit me. What I had learned from Margaret was that the stories that will make the deepest impact and will leave the most lasting impressions are those you draw from personal experience. Was it possible that the story of the pearl necklace, that for all these years I had assumed was a good story but purely fictional, was actually based on true events in the life of this woman who has come to have such great influence on my life? I certainly knew she was a practical woman; I couldn't imagine her making up a sensational story just to

stir emotion. She would have grounded it in true events and I started looking for evidence to back it up.

I discovered that her mother, Elizabeth White, immigrated from England in 1870 when she was 22 years old. In the Fireside stories, I found several stories about an Elizabeth who had come from far across the ocean. The only work she could find was working in a factory and she couldn't afford to live anywhere but a boarding house. One story told how lonely she was and how she longed for a friend. Some of the rich people in the town snubbed her, but she caught the eye of one of their most popular and favorite sons who was attracted to her goodness.

In the story of the pearl necklace, the wealthy mill owner lived in eastern Pennsylvania. When the young couple married, they moved away to a nearby town. Margaret was born in Walton, NY. It was a small town then and is a small town today and it lies just over the northeast border of Pennsylvania.

After the fire, Mr. Morse took the little girl and her mother to a place far enough away that no one would know what had happened to her. In the story, Margaret describes how they loved to play at the lake. There's a lake about 100 miles north of Walton. Not far from the lake is a little college town: Kirkland, NY. In the 1900 census, I found the name of a college student there: Gurdon Eggleston.

Now I found a story about May—with an M—about to graduate from college. Several young men are interested in her. Should she choose the rich one so she would always have financial security? Or should she choose the football star who always made her laugh. Or maybe she should choose the scholar. She didn't know what to do and sought the advice of a favorite professor who told her she should look at them through the eyes of who would she want to be the father of her children.

She had gone back to her room and found bouquets of

roses from her suitors. But there was also a plain lunch box. She opened it and found it filled with forget-me-nots which she loved. But who were they from? She placed a few of the flowers in her hair and tucked some in her belt and left for the ceremonies. On the way, she saw her friend, Gene, with a G. "Oh, I see you got my flowers!" He said that he had left very early in the morning because he wanted to pick up his mother to meet her. Along the way, he spotted the forget-me-nots, which he knew she loved, emptied his lunch box and filled it with the flowers, and put them on the mail train that was just going by. He had hoped they would get to her.

She had met Gene in her Geology class and they had spent many happy hours combing the hillsides looking for rocks and wildflowers. He was always so courteous and cheerful and good-natured, even when things weren't going right. And here he was being so sweet to his little mother. Yes, Gene was the one she would choose to get to know better.

One more little piece of evidence that would seem to back up the story. In 1921, Margaret applied for a passport. It had a picture of Margaret in it. She was beautiful! As part of the application, she had to include an affidavit of someone who could vouch they knew her. The writing was the same as whoever had filled out the application, which I would assume was Margaret. But the person vouching for her was her mother, Elizabeth White, who had only signed her name. Clearly, the signature was made by a hand that wrote with great difficulty, which the story of the pearl necklace would have explained.

I can't say for sure that the story of the pearl necklace is true. Details of the story were likely changed. But I believe the evidence suggests it was based on true events in Margaret's life and the life of her mother and somehow that makes the story even more meaningful to me.

As I mentioned, my husband loves to do family history and he likes to see if people are related to him. So he searched on the Family Tree Search and found someone had already

placed Gurdon Eggleston's name in their family tree. He didn't have to go back very many generations before he found that Gurdon's family line merged with one of my husband's family lines. But what was missing on the record—what was left blank because it was unknown—was that Gurdon had a wife and a little girl.

But it's not left blank anymore. Almost exactly 100 years from that sorrowful parting in a lonely camp on a lake in Maine, the names of Margaret White Eggleston and Gurdon Eggleston with their little girl have been re-united, always and forever.

So why have I spent your time telling you about Margaret Eggleston?

Well, I have lots of reasons. First of all, I wanted you to feel the difference between a story and information. What if I had introduced Margaret this way? Margaret White was born in Walton, NY, in 1878. She married Gurdon Eggleston, a clergyman, who died in 1914. In 1920, while teaching at Boston University, she wrote a book, *The Use of Story in Religious Education*.

Would you have cared about her? Would you have any pictures of her in your mind? Would she have any personality? Notice how each story revealed different facets of her personality.

The function of story is to stir feeling and awaken emotion. We use words like dry, cold and hard to describe facts, but stories breathe life into them. Stories help us to care. They fire up desire and passion. If you find the right story, you can create an interest in any subject. Stories help us to see clearly and to understand things in our hearts that our eyes alone cannot comprehend and that facts, alone, cannot reveal.

Stories are one of the most important tools you have in teaching your children and are best used in that first step in the pattern for learning.

My grownup son recently finished reading a story for a

second time—Charles Dicken's A *Tale of Two Cities*. He was home when he finished reading it and I happened to be in the kitchen when he said, "Wow." And again, "Wow." If you've read a book like that, you know exactly what was going on inside of him. To borrow the words of someone else, it was enlarging his heart, enlightening his mind and it tasted delicious to him. It was good fruit. The deeps of our souls, like the deeps of the ocean, are silent and I didn't want to intrude on the work that was taking place inside of him with mere chatter.

In ways I don't fully understand, that story was making him better and wiser and thereby, happier.

Not all books have that effect on us. What gave this book that power?

And my answer is that it has everything to do with the heart through which the story flows. Charles Dickens had a happy childhood. He was a voracious reader and loved to spend time out in nature. But that season of his life came to an abrupt end when he was just eleven and his father was thrown into a debtor's prison. Dickens was left to wander the streets and fend for himself. He ended up working 10-hour days at a rat-infested, tumble-down shoe blacking factory. Over the next while, he experienced a cold, bleak winter of life where he knew hunger, loneliness, poverty and despair. As miserable as it was, the experience enlarged his heart and carried into his writings.

But there's another heart through which A *Tale of Two Cities* flowed. Thomas Carlyle had been encouraged by his dear friend, John Stuart Mills, to write on the French Revolution. After five months of painful toil, he gave his one and only manuscript of Volume One to Mills for suggestions before sending it on to the publisher. Weeks passed and Carlyle hadn't heard anything from his friend, so he paid him a visit and found that his friend had loaned the manuscript out where it had carelessly been left on the parlor floor. The

housekeeper thought it was trash and used it to light the hearth fires.

Mills was absolutely beside himself with grief. He could think of no way to repair the damages, although he offered monetary compensation.

To Carlyle's credit, he confided to his wife, Jane, "Mills, poor fellow, is terribly cut up. We must endeavor to hide from him how very serious this business of life is for us."

And serious it was. The Carlyles had no money. They had hoped this work would help lift them from their poverty. And he had already destroyed his notes.

Carlyle wrote, "I remember and can still remember less of it than of anything I ever wrote with such toil. It is gone."

He had no hope of recovering it.

But that night, he had a dream in which his father and brother begged him not to abandon the work. The next morning, he accepted enough money from Mills to buy some paper and he started writing again.

First, he wrote volumes two and three, then he went back to recreate volume one, writing the entire manuscript from memory, using words, as Carlyle himself described, that came "direct and flamingly from the heart." He said, "It is as if my invisible schoolmaster had torn my copybook when I showed it, and said, 'No, boy! Thou must write it better.'"

The result was a masterpiece that has remained in print to this day. He wrote as though he was a participant to all the events of the French Revolution, bringing it to life in such a way that the reader feels like he, too, is there.

It was this work that Charles Dickens read and re-read and that inspired him to write his A *Tale of Two Cities*. My son simply had to pull the book off a shelf, open and read and the souls and understanding of both Carlyle and Dickens poured into him.

Just as the wisdom and experience of Carlyle and Dickens was preserved within the covers of a book my son only had to

pull off a shelf and read, so has the wisdom and experience of all ages been preserved and is now being made available to us in miraculous ways. A single book may contain an entire lifetime of someone's toil and effort. Today, we're not limited to the narrow view of our own experiences. We can see and experience life through thousands of eyes. And history has preserved the best of the best for us.

Our children have instant access to the greatest literature of all time. When they come to a word they don't understand, they can simply click and learn its meaning. We owe a great debt to Noah Webster who spent his life mastering 28 languages so that he could take each word, one at a time, and look at it through its roots and pass that knowledge on to us. When our children come to a word they can't pronounce, just click and there it is. Niebelungenlied. I never would have figured out how to pronounce that word without hearing it. Where is this place again? Click away and it takes you to a map. Click again, and you can view it. Can you not remember who a certain person was? Click and find. Forget a fact? Click and find.

This is an education fit for royalty. We have the potential to raise the noblest, most cultured, most refined, the wisest and happiest generation in the history of the world. The eyes of those who have suffered, sweat, sacrificed and starved to bring forth truths are upon us. But here we are with a field that is white and already to harvest, but we're faced with a generation that has little desire to reap. It is your privilege and upon you rests the responsibility to light the fires of desire within their hearts. No one can do it better than you.

Nothing opens the heart like a good story. And some of the works of the greatest storytellers that have ever lived are preserved in the Libraries of Hope Library. Just as I brought Margaret Eggleston to life through her stories, these storytellers bring the great men and women of history to life so that they can have a real and personal influence on the lives of

your children. Through stories, they can become some of their best friends.

All these wonderful stories were wrapped in love. These storytellers didn't shy away from sharing their love for the children. Dearest boys and girls—I love you. Signed, your loving friend; your affectionate friend. You'll feel the warmth.

So let's talk about using Story in your everyday life.

I strongly believe that our ability to maintain hope in the days ahead will be in direct proportion to how broad and how deep our reservoir of stories is from which we draw. There's an old saying that says, "What's down in the well comes up in the bucket." You cannot draw from a story that's not there. What happens when we try to operate our lives from a puddle of stories? We see the answer to that question everyday in the news of people who take desperate measures because they find themselves locked in raw emotion for which there is no story to help find a way through. It doesn't mean you need to read stories all day long. Even if you only have time for one story a day, one story a day is 365 stories a year and in 18 years when your children leave home, they will have heard over 6500 stories! That's a pretty good start, I'd say.

And if you want to instill a love of faith, freedom and family, you must find stories that reflect these values.

I happened to be looking for something on the secular humanist site and landed on the Frequently Asked Questions page. A parent asked for recommendations of books for his children that he could pick up at the library that would be free of any reference to religion or spirituality or faith. The response was if the American Library Association recommended a book, he could be confident it would be safe for his family.

Dr. Paul Fitz, Professor of Psychology at New York University, did a study of 90 of the most widely used reading and social studies texts used in our schools at the time. Keep in mind—this was back in 1986. In social studies, which was

supposed to reflect American life to children in younger grades, not one of the texts examined—over 15,000 pages—had any reference to any word of any type of religious activity, such as attending church or worshiping in praying. Not one text mentioned marriage as a foundation of the family. Not one text used the words "marriage, husband, wife, homemaker."

In upper grades, there was not a single reference to any patriotic theme after the year 1780. Only one story focused on traditional male/female romantic love. No stories supported motherhood or showed any woman or girl with a positive relationship to a baby, a young child or even a doll. However, stories of sex-role reversal was common as well as stories of feminism.

We are seeing, truly, that what is in the well comes up in the bucket. Libraries of Hope exists to give you another choice.

Children and adults are naturally drawn to stories so it is one of your main tools in cultivating hearts. And the music in your voice is an important part of relaying those stories. So pay attention that you don't allow the words to come out as a monotone. Let your voice reflect the emotion of the story.

The music in your voice is the reason why read-alouds are so vital in childhood especially. Their hearts need to be well stocked with stories and if the only stories they can get to are the ones where they have to work so hard to decode the words, it's a great loss of opportunity. Listening to audio recordings is a wonderful option as well. And having your children read aloud, too, opens that thought and emotion connection we talked about earlier.

Use stories to awaken interest in any and every subject. Even huge corporations are beginning to turn to stories. Rudyard Kipling wrote, "If history were told in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten."

And don't forget to tell family stories. These family stories

have the power to bind the hearts of generations and give children a sense of belonging.

Work towards being able to put the book down and share stories heart to heart. We are a story deprived generation, so we have some work to do to fill our own reservoirs. But many of you are familiar with scripture stories. Start there. You cannot measure the impression of a well-told scripture story told in the dark from the heart of one who loves it just as a child drops off to sleep.

Once upon a time, I listened to a story of a strand of pearls. That story has lifted me up and changed my life forever. Lifting up and changing lives IS the power of a story. Stories can heal our hearts. Stories can heal our world. Don't underestimate the power of a story.

Nature

"If the trees and flowers, the clouds and the wind, all tell wonderful stories to the child, he has resources of happiness which no power can deprive him."

One day, Helen Keller who could neither see nor hear, was visited by a very dear friend who had just returned from a long walk in the woods. She asked her friend what she had seen, to which she replied, "Nothing in particular."

Helen exclaimed, "I might have been incredulous had I not been accustomed to such responses for long ago I became convinced that the seeing see little. How was it possible, I asked myself, to walk for an hour through the woods and see nothing worthy of note? I who cannot see find hundreds of things to interest me through mere touch. I feel the delicate symmetry of a leaf. I pass my hands lovingly about the smooth skin of a silver birch, or the rough, shaggy bark of a pine…. I feel the delightful, velvety texture of a flower, and something of the miracle of Nature is revealed to me.

"At times my heart cries out with longing to see all these things. If I can get so much pleasure from mere touch, how much more beauty must be revealed by sight. Yet, those who have eyes apparently see little. The panorama of color and action which fills the world is taken for granted. It is human, perhaps, to appreciate little that which we have and to long for that which we have not, but it is a great pity that in the world of light, the gift of sight is used only as a mere convenience rather than as a means of adding fulness to life."

This section is dedicated to raising a generation of

children who will never walk through the forest and see "nothing." Many of the ideas I'll talk about have come from a little book written in 1904 called *How Nature Study Should Be Taught* by Edward Bigelow. You might enjoy reading it. I included sections of it in the Mother's Learning Library book on nature.

The objective of Nature Study is not the same as science. "Nature study is not a systematic study of nature, for that is science. Nature study is emotional. Science is intellectual." Professor Bailey of Cornell University said, "Nature study is a revolt from the teaching of mere science in the elementary grades…. Nature study is not science. It is not fact. It is spirit. It is concerned with the child's outlook on the world…. Nature study is not to be taught for the purpose of making the youth a scientist. Now and then a pupil will desire to pursue a science for the sake of the science, and he should be encouraged. But every pupil may be taught to be interested in plants and birds and insects and running brooks, and thereby his life will be the stronger. The crop of scientists will take care of itself."

Longfellow understood the objective of Nature Study:

> And Nature, the old nurse, took
> The child upon her knee,
> Saying, "Here is a story book
> Thy Father has written for thee."

Wordsworth knew:

> To know Nature is to know God.
> The world is too much with us; late and soon,
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers,
> Little we see in nature that is ours.

Shakespeare knew about the:

> "…tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones and good in every thing."

Nature is God's university. John Burroughs, the great naturalist, said, "I would, by all means teach the young people the elements of the great sciences…. I would also inculcate the scientific habit of mind, accuracy of observation, care in reading conclusions…. But I would not encourage the young people to think they can dissect their way into the mystery of Nature, or reach her through the laboratory."

The objective of nature study for the well-educated heart is pure and simple joy. This is what nature study looks like.

First, from the life of the great painter, Jean Francois Millet:

One day little Francois stood at his father's side. They were watching the setting sun sink into the waves. The western sky was all aglow with purple and deep crimson. Great bars of golden light were stretched across the horizon. The boy felt the glory of the scene. The father lifted his hat and bowed his head, saying gravely, "My son, it is God." The boy never forgot.

Second, from the life of Henry Arthur King, an Oxford trained professor, whose writings have inspired me greatly:

"My first real discovery of nature in life came one morning in April 1916. My father put me on the back of his bike where I had a little seat and said, "Off we go." And then he turned in the wrong direction, for I thought he was taking me down to Quakers' meeting—it was Sunday.

"No," he said, "we are going somewhere else today." And we rode for about eight miles, and we stopped at a wood…. We went into the wood, and there, suddenly, was a great pool of bluebells stretching for perhaps a hundred yards in the shade of the oak trees. And I could scarcely breathe because the impression was so great. The experience then was just the bluebells and the scent; now, when I recall it, it is also the love of my father who chose to do that that morning—to give me that experience. I am sure he had been there the day

before, found it, and thought, "I'll take my son there." As we rode there and as we rode back, we heard the distant thud of the guns at the Battle of the Somme, where thousands were dying every day. That overwhelming experience of a natural phenomenon, a demonstration of beneficent creation, and at the same time hearing those guns on the Somme—that experience has remained with me almost more clearly than anything else in my life."

This next experience is related by Lucy Maud Montgomery who gave us Anne of Green Gables:

"I had always a deep love of nature. A little fern growing in the woods, a shallow sheet of June-bells under the firs, moonlight falling on the ivory column of a tall birch, an evening star over the old tamarack on the dyke, shadow-waves rolling over a field of ripe wheat—all gave me 'thoughts that lay too deep for tears' and feelings which I had no vocabulary to express. I was very near to a kingdom of ideal beauty."

And finally, my most memorable nature study lesson took place on a Saturday night when I was a young girl. I had just gotten out of the shower and my hair was still wrapped in a towel. As I walked past the front door, I noticed my dad out on the front porch sitting alone in the dark. I went out and sat next to him. He smiled at me but didn't say anything. He was just staring up at the sky. I looked and looked to see what he was looking at, but all I could see were the stars on a warm summer night. Finally, he sighed a deep sigh and said, "Do you ever wonder what's out there?"

And then the two of us sat there together for the longest time in silence—just wondering.

From my notes: "To teach young people or old people how to observe nature is a good deal like trying to teach them how to eat their dinner. The first thing necessary in the latter case is a good appetite; this given, the rest follows very easily. And in observing nature, unless you have the appetite, the love,

the spontaneous desire, you will get little satisfaction. It is the heart that sees more than the mind. To love nature is the first step in observing her."[9]

"I would have the boys and girls rush over to the apple tree, pick up handfuls of apples putting some in pocket and munching the rest. That is nature study. I would have those same boys and girls sit at a table and make cross sections and vertical slices of some of those apples, noting the structure, the relation of seeds, cases, pulp and epidermis. That is science.

"I would have them climb on the ledge, stand near the boulder, and have a general good time in fun. That is nature study. I would tell them a little of the history of this ledge, its relations to the surrounding country, its geological structure and perhaps its chemical composition. That is science.

"Enjoy the beautiful moonlight; note the bright stars and planets and construct the fanciful pictures of the constellations. That is nature study. Tell of the surface of the moon, the distance of the stars, the various physical characters of the planets. That is science."

The learning tools for a successful nature study program are: "fresh air, sunshine, trees, flowers, birds and all the other happy life of the fields and forests. Weave in generous proportions. Do not skimp and carve, and trim, and minimize, and scrutinize too much. Pour in the generous cupfuls, hours rather than minutes…. Let them have them in their fullness of enjoyment."

Don't fall into this trap I wrote down from a 1947 text: "[If] a poor child picked strawberries, the experience was turned into an arithmetic lesson. If he rolled a snowball, he learned about levers and proceeded from those to wedges. If he took a walk, he had to observe every bird, beast, stone and occupation of man. Day and night these ardent [well-

[9] John Burroughs, *Little Nature Studies for Little People Vol. 2* (1896).

intentioned educators] stalked their children, allowing never a moment for play or fancy."

Loving nature is as simple as loving your mother. And happens just as naturally when a child spends time with her.

"Oh no," Edward Bigelow says with tongue in cheek, "some scientific appreciator of a mother may say, that is crude; it flavors of the Middle Ages, of the amateur, of those who love their mother from the heart. This is an age of scientific spirit, an age of the intellect rather than of the affections.

"Do nothing so simple as that; learn really to know your mother, and then you can love her with solid, intellectual appreciation.

"First collect some pictures and drawings of all the mothers you can find; arrange them side by side and compare your mother with them. That will add to your knowledge of the comparative merits of your mother's appearance.

"Devote a half-hour at a certain time every day to the study of mothers. Draw pictures of them; make a detailed list of color of hair, number of eyes, nostrils, ears; length of chin, height, weight, number of fingers on each hand; state the age, past history and a hundred or more other facts. Arrange these details under a few heads, draw a bracket before each, and collocate these in line under one big brace, with the word Mother written in capital letters.

"Make a drawing of your own mother standing erect, and also bending down to kiss you as you start for school in the morning. Sketch in detail her eyes, fingers and nose.

"Write a list of nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs that will apply to your own mother, and from these compose ten sentences each day from 10:15 to 10:45 a.m. in connection with your drawing work, and if the task is completed before the time has expired, we will fold our arms and sing about our mothers. Bear in mind that you must never really go to see your mother for the enjoyment of seeing her, nor only for the

enjoyment of her loving presence, but you must learn to love her, and to let her influence permeate every fiber of your life, by noting down with pad and pencil, all possible details of her physical structure."

A love of nature? Too much detail, too much method, too much correlating kills it.

At the turn of the 20th century when schools were feeling like they needed to add nature study to their curriculum, and adding it the only way they could justify it, by presenting it with measurable outcomes, which means facts and testing, this little interchange was posted in a local New York daily paper.

The principal of a large grade-school in that city was sitting in his office intently poring over reports and excuses, when the janitor swung open the door and announced:

"A lady to see you, sir."

A German woman of ponderous size and waddling gait strode into the room. Both sleeves were rolled up to her elbows. In her right hand, by her side, she carried a huge lobster, just touching the floor, and swinging in accompaniment with her every pacing step. Her appearance indicated that it was indignation which had separated her from the wash-tub.

She swung the lobster over her head and slapped it down on the table near his desk with a bang that made the absorbed mind of the principal leap from mental to physical matters.

"Vat ish dat?" shouted the belligerent visitor.

"Why-wh-y, that, madam is a lobster, but—"

"How many leegz has it?"

"Strictly speaking there are ten, but only eight are—"

"How many claws has it?"

"The first pair of the ten legs have large claws, the next pair have small claws, and the other two have only—"

"How many eyeez has it?"

"The lobster has two eyes—"

"Vat color is—"

"But wait, madam; before I answer any more questions, please explain why—"

"Dat's vat I vant to know—vat for ish dat our teacher ask my Shonny all dese fool questions. I vork so hard at mine vash-tub all day long, send my boy Shonny here to larn, and your teacher tell him all dat shruff, and ax him all dese fool questions. Vat for ish dat?"

That is a good question. "What for is that" when children are little?

Too much lobster spoils their appetite.

Save the systematic unfolding of facts and information for when they're ready for science and they've got a deep emotional base to plant it in. Charles Kingsley observed, "No amount of book learning will make a man a scientific man; nothing but patient observation and quiet and fair thoughts over what he has observed."

Nature study is all about patient and quiet observation.

And a generous dose of wonder and curiosity.

So the number one method of teaching Nature Study is direct immersion. Translation: Outdoor play and discovery without making a lesson out of everything

I took a couple of my granddaughters to a little park here in Appomattox a little while back. It wasn't long until they got tired of the swings and slide and one of them had gotten some dirt on her hand, so we found a little stream to wash it off. Then the real fun began. I just sat and watched over the next hour as they dug in the mud with little sticks and raced leaf boats down the stream and watched the dragonflies landing here and there.

Lesson objective achieved: Pure and simple joy.

Little children love naming and learning the names of everything, so that's a second natural part of Nature Study. My father loved flowers just like his father. He taught me all their names when I was a little girl. I loved the hydrangeas that grew by my father's office, the gardenias by the back door,

the hibiscus by my bedroom window. I looked forward to the johnny-jump-ups that popped out each spring with the apricot blossoms. I cut pyracantha berry branches with my mom every Thanksgiving to decorate the Thanksgiving table. By the way, fairies definitely do not dance on zucchini; they only dance on rose petals and hollyhocks. I can still feel the excitement of running out to the back yard in my pajamas because my dad told me the Pink Lady had opened up. And I remember clearly feeling God's love while lying in the grass beneath the camellia bush.

On May Day we used to make little paper baskets and fill them with flowers from the garden. Then we'd hang them on the doors of some of the older neighbors in the neighborhoods, ring the doorbell and then run and hide in the bushes so we could watch their reactions. My oldest daughter emailed me a picture of the little Mayday baskets she made with her little girls this year. She told me that while she was combing little six-year-old Madison's hair that night, Madison said, "I feel so happy inside! I just love doing things for other people and I was thinking to myself, 'I'm so glad my mom made up this plan.'"

I call that a successful heart-based education nature lesson plan.

You can also help open eyes by sharing Nature stories. They don't necessarily have to be told while you're out in nature. Your children will carry the impressions made by the stories with them while they're out in nature. As I've read the books I've been gathering to our Nature Library, I've been astonished at how my eyes have been opened as I'm out walking in our neighborhood. I notice things I've never noticed before. Even the songs of the birds have taken on new meaning.

For the familiar years, [*Note: you'll learn more about the Developmental levels in Section 5] start with stories of how mother birds, insects and animals take care of their

children; the homes they build for them; how they feed them. Those are the stories I've tried to start each of our nature books with in the Nature Series.

Many young children thoroughly enjoy Thornton Burgess' nature stories or the Clara Dillingham Pierson books, all found in the Nature Stories Library. These stories are much different than the facts and information books so common for children today. The facts books will continue to feed the fire that's already burning. Right now, we're trying to get the fire started.

"If the trees and flowers, the clouds and the wind, all tell wonderful stories to the child he has sources of happiness of which no power can deprive him."

We've become accustomed to associating nature and science studies with experiments for children. But can anything reveal the wonder and mystery of nature more than watching a beautiful flower grow from a tiny seed? Don't make your children measure and record the growth in the beginning. Let them enjoy and be amazed. We've become so practical, I see lots of mothers grow vegetable gardens with their kids. But I have yet to see the four-year-old who laughs with delight at the plate of freshly grown spinach on his plate. Let them grow flower gardens when they're little! The more the better. The flower industry is as huge as it is because flowers speak to our hearts. Is there anything more exquisite in color or texture or fragrance than a flower? In the Nature Series, I dedicated a whole book to growing flowers. The writers speak to the children directly, instructing them how to take some dirt and transform it. Nothing fancy. Very basic. But highly rewarding.

Corrie Ten Boom in her book, *The Hiding Place*, wrote: "People can learn to love from growing flowers."

Eventually keeping a Nature Journal will deepen their connection with Nature. Unlike a Science Journal where you might draw plants and diagram its parts and add Latin names, the Nature Journal is purely emotional. John Ruskin, when

the camera arrived on the scene in the mid-1800s, warned people to keep sketching; that if they stopped, they would lessen their ability to see the beauty in the world. Sketching nature will open that part of the heart and will help us remember what we see. What will you sketch? Flowers in fields, a butterfly on a flower, sunsets and sunrises, trees and the bark on trees, birds, squirrels, ponds, clouds, bees, ants. When you re-create a leaf, you notice the shades of color, the intricate vein work, the fringe designs around the edge that might all bypass you when you just look at a photo. By sketching and later coloring, you start noticing the panorama of color all around and the beautiful contrasts.

The worst thing I would suggest is to give your children a journal and say, "Draw." The way to inspire them is to let them see you drawing in your own nature journal because you enjoy doing it. They may watch you for months before they finally say, "I'd like to try that." And that's perfectly fine. You may be saying that you can't draw. That's common. But the truth is, everyone can draw. It's a skill like learning to write. I can't recommend John Muir Laws enough. He offers so many free videos to help us learn to sketch from nature.

I love his passion for it. He wrote:

"When we see with clear eyes, we know that we are surrounded with beauty. Let yourself fall in love with your life by paying attention. As David Steindl-Rast says: 'It is not happiness that makes us grateful. It's gratefulness that makes us happy.' As you record what you see in your journal, give thanks for what surrounds you. When you celebrate the world through the ages of your journal, every stroke of your brush or pencil can be a song of gratitude for the opportunity to be alive.

"Love can be defined as sustained, compassionate attention. Nature journaling will slow you down and make you stop, sit down, and look again. Engaging in this process helps you to organize your thoughts, piece together answers and ask

richer questions. Once you slow down and look long enough to record observations in your journal, mysteries will unfold before you…. I draw to see."

Keep in mind, the objective is love of nature, not perfect journals. Edward Bigelow said he was once asked to judge a nature journal contest. As he looked over the entries, he found beautiful, perfect handwriting and beautiful drawings in all eighty of them. But all eighty of them were alike. This is how he described the winning entry:

"I picked up an unattractive letter written on the leaves of a pocket note-book. The drawing that accompanied it was crude and the paper was soiled by finger marks. With difficulty I read it but was fascinated as I deciphered the story of a boy's seaside investigation of the fiddler crab. He wanted to know how they lived underground; what they did; what food they ate; what kind of quarters they occupied. He made inquiries of the fishermen. No one knew. He said, 'I'll find out if it takes a week.' He borrowed pick, shovel and crowbar. He went to work, and he found out. Then he wrote the story, as he sat beside the hole that he had dug after several hours' hard work. He made the drawing after careful watching of the living object. I was sorry that I had not a basketful of prizes to give that boy, because he wrote his letter for the love of it."

For the love of it. That's the most critical component.

So how will you know if your children have successfully passed the objectives of Nature Study? The following test questions are suggested in the little book I've been quoting from:

- Do you enjoy going on rambles across the fields, through the woods and down the ravines to the meadows and swamps?
- Do you like to pick the flowers, hear the birds sing, and watch all forms of life?

- Do you read outdoor books that tell of nature's interesting plants and animal life?

A yes to these three questions earns 100%.

And I would say the child is now ready to move on to Science.

John Burroughs said, "Unless science is mixed with emotion and appeals to the heart and imagination, it is like dead, inorganic matter." The child who has successfully passed a course in Nature Study will be well prepared for his next studies in Science.

One of my daughters just returned from the Amazon forest in South America. She told me that just prior to venturing into the forest, a teacher in the group shared a pattern in nature for them to watch for. And then turned them loose to discover the pattern for themselves which stirred up all kinds of questions—naturally. She was amazed at how many practical lessons she walked away with when she asked her own questions and paid attention to her own observations. It was a much different experience than the usual lecture on species and facts. She loved it.

A couple of closing thoughts: I've been re-reading the Four Gospels and this time through, I noted how much Jesus loved being out in nature. He taught by the seashore, retired to the mountain, prayed in the garden. The biggest troublemakers were in the crowded cities! He frequently sought the solitude of nature to restore His soul. His earthly ministry was just three years, and what did He leave us? A handful of stories, and so many of them tied into nature:

Consider the lilies of the fields; if you have faith the size of a mustard seed; even a sparrow does not fall unnoticed; the fields are white and ready to harvest; a sower sowed seeds that fell on the wayside; He spoke of wheat and tares and living waters. There is an important lesson in His example to us.

Louisa May Alcott wrote:

> My wise mother turned me loose in the country and let me run wild, learning of Nature what no books could teach, and being led—as those who truly love her seldom fail to be—'through Nature up to Nature's God.'
>
> I had an early run in the woods before the dew was off the grass. The moss was like velvet, and as I ran under the arch of yellow and red leaves I sang for joy, my heart was so bright and the world so beautiful. I stopped at the end of the walk and saw the sunshine out over the wide 'Virginia meadows.'
>
> It seemed like going through a dark life or grave into heaven beyond. A very strange and solemn feeling came over me as I stood there, with no sound but the rustle of the pines, no one near me, and the sun so glorious, as for me alone. It seemed as if I felt God as I never did before, and I prayed in my heart that I might keep that happy sense of nearness all my life.

To that entry there is a note added, years later: "I have, for I most sincerely think that the little girl 'got religion' that day in the wood, when dear Mother nature led her to God."

That's Nature Study for the Well-Educated Heart.

Sleeping Beauty and True Love's First Kiss

The year 2020 was really something, wasn't it? Like the meme I saw, if 2020 was an ice cream truck, it's been delivering liver and onions, right?

I live in kind of a bubble world back in the countryside of Appomattox, Virginia, and got my first clue that something was off when I went to get on a flight to Salt Lake last March and there were only about seven people on my flight. And I thought… Hmmm…. Do they know something I don't know? I flew out to stay with my 98-year-old mother for a few weeks and when I got there and went to the store to get some groceries, the shelves were wiped clean! I couldn't believe it. Thankfully we had toilet paper. Who would've thought toilet paper would be such a precious commodity?

And then I woke up a couple of days later to the house shaking. We were having a big earthquake and my initial reaction was, "Serious?" You didn't want to run outside because you might run into people and die of Covid but you didn't want to stay inside in case a bigger earthquake was coming. It was a bit unnerving. And then I kept watching my flight get bumped and there was talk of shutting down airline travel altogether and I wondered if I was ever going to get back home to my husband again!

Like I said, that was back in March and things have just gotten a bit crazier, haven't they? Pandemics and fires and winds and riots and looting and unrest and murder hornets and asteroids speeding towards us.

For whoever started this Jumanji game in 2020, can you

just hurry and finish it?

But do you know what? The world has been here before. Many times.

I was reading an old book about the fifteenth century world of Henry V:

"Old faiths had lost their inspiration. Old forms of government were breaking down. The very fabric of society seemed to be on the point of dissolution."

Doesn't that describe the world we are living in?

How do we get through this and what can you and I do about it? I am here to tell you there is much that we can do. But it may not be what you think.

I love the painting by Daniel Ridgeway Knight found on the cover of this book.



Notice how dark and gloomy the sky is. It even has the appearance that the sky is falling. But pay attention to the woman. She has left her home for a moment and climbed to a higher place; you can see the homes in the background. She will go back home, but right now, notice her focused gaze. She is taking time to feed her heart with beauty. And notice the container of water at her feet. That made me think of the prophet Jeremiah, who, in another troubling time of dissolution, told the people their problem was they had hewn out cisterns that could hold no Living Water. We cannot live without water! She has a supply of water at her feet.

This seemingly simple act of taking the time to feed our hearts with beauty not only is the way we will survive chaotic times; it is the one way the world can be healed.

"Fortunate is the person who has been educated to the perception of beauty; he possesses a heritage of which no reverses can rob him. Yet it is a heritage possible to all who will take the trouble to begin early in life to cultivate the finer qualities of the soul, the eye, and the heart."

Many years ago, there was a poor gentleman shut up in one of the great prisons of France. He was very sad and unhappy. He had been put into prison wrongfully, and it seemed to him as though there was no one in the world who cared for him.

He could not read, for there were no books in prison. He was not allowed to have pens or paper, and so he could not write. The time dragged slowly by. There was nothing that he could do to make the days seem shorter. His only pastime was walking back and forth in the paved prison yard. There was no work to be done, no one to talk with.

One fine morning in spring, he was taking his walk in the yard. He was counting the paving stones, as he had done a thousand times before. All at once he stopped. What had made that little mound of earth between two of the stones? He stooped down to see. A seed of some kind had fallen

between the stones. It had sprouted; and now a tiny green leaf was pushing its way up out of the ground. He was about to crush it with his foot, when he saw that there was a kind of soft coating over the leaf.

"Ah!" said he. "This coating is to keep it safe. I must not harm it." And he went on with his walk.

The next day he almost stepped upon the plant before he thought of it. He stooped to look at it. There were two leaves now, and the plant was much stronger and greener than it was the day before. He stayed by it a long time, looking at all its parts.

Every morning after that, he went at once to his little plant. He wanted to see if it had been chilled by the cold or scorched by the sun. He wanted to see how much it had grown.

He named his plant Picciola. Every day it grew larger and more beautiful. The plant had a thousand pretty ways which he noticed. He saw how it always bent a little toward the sun; he saw how the flowers folded their petals before a storm.

He had never thought of such things before, and yet he had often seen whole gardens of flowers in bloom.

One day, with soot and water he made some ink; he spread out his handkerchief for paper; he used a sharpened stick for a pen—and all for what? He felt that he must write down the doings of his little pet. He spent all his time with the plant.

As the summer passed by, Picciola grew more lovely every day. There were no fewer than thirty blossoms on its stem.

But one sad morning it began to droop. The prisoner did not know what to do. He gave it water, but it still drooped. The leaves were withering. The stones of the prison yard would not let the plant live.

He knew that there was but one way to save his treasure. Alas! how could he hope that it might be done? The stones must be taken up at once.

But this was a thing the jailer dared not do. The rules of

the prison were strict, and no stone must be moved. Only the highest officers in the land could have such a thing done.

The poor man could not sleep. Picciola must die. Already the flowers had withered; the leaves would soon fall from the stem.

Then a new thought came to him. He would ask the great emperor himself to save his plant.

It was a hard thing for him to do, to ask a favor of the man whom he hated, the man who had shut him up in this very prison. But for the sake of Picciola he would do it.

He wrote his little story on his handkerchief. Then he gave it into the care of a young girl, who promised to carry it to the emperor. Ah! if the poor plant would only live a few days longer!

What a long journey that was for the young girl! What a long, dreary waiting it was for the prisoner and Picciola.

But at last news came to the prison. The stones were to be taken up. Picciola was saved!

The emperor's kind wife had heard the story of the prisoner's care for the plant. She saw the handkerchief on which he had written of its pretty ways.

"Surely," she said, "it can do us no good to keep such a man in prison."

And so, at last, he was set free. Of course he was no longer sad and unloving. He saw how God had cared for him and the little plant, and how kind and true are the hearts of even rough men. And he cherished Picciola as a dear, loved friend whom he could never forget.

By focusing on something of beauty, we literally bring down the gloomy prison walls of doubt and worry; fear and anxiety. You may remember this from The Secret Garden:

> Two things cannot be in one place
> Where you tend a rose, my lad,
> A thistle cannot grow.

Confucius gave the solution for today's problems over 2500 years ago:

> To put the world right in order
> We must first put the nation in order;
> To put the nation in order,
> We must first put the family in order,
> To put the family in order,
> We must first cultivate our personal life,
> We must first set our hearts right.

I have come to believe that the task of setting hearts right falls on the mother-hearts of this world. It is she who can best awaken a love for beauty in a child's heart. And what I'd like to spend the next few minutes doing is showing you what that looks like. The work begins with the mother tending her own heart.

There's a saying out there that goes: "When life falls apart, make art."

The arts—Music, Visual Arts, Poetry and Story—are how we feed the heart and set the heart "right." You even find the word "art" in the word "heart."

Let's take a look at each of these languages of the heart one at a time.

MUSIC

"There is something wonderful in music. Words are wonderful enough, but music is more wonderful. It speaks not to our thoughts as words do; it speaks straight to our hearts and spirits, at the very core and root of our souls. Music soothes us, stirs us up, it puts noble feelings into us; it melts us to tears, we know now how…. This 'heavenly Maid' is a chief restorer of our mental and physical equilibrium. Music has the power to solve many of our problems for us."[10]

If we truly understood the power of music in our lives, we

[10] Charles Kingsley, *The Good News of God: Sermons* (1859).

would surely fill our days with more music and song. Music was used on the battleground to stir up courage in the hearts of soldiers in the morning and in the evening, it was used to heal their broken hearts.

When Elisha's advice was sought in the fighting of a great battle, he first called for a harpist, and when the harpist played, "the hand of the Lord came upon him" and he saw clearly what to say.

When Saul was depressed and melancholy, he called for David to bring his harp. And his soul was restored.

In a dark, damp, dungeon, Paul and Silas sang hymns and the prison walls came down.

Hymns are the golden gateway to heaven.

As the Titanic was sinking, musicians calmly played *Nearer My God to Thee* until they went down with the ship.

"Through music, the mind is stilled to outside influences and becomes a reflector for the inner light which comes only through stillness. Faith comes when the chaotic thoughts of the outside world are stilled."

Until modern times when music became a performing art, music was used as a primary medicine in healing.

A young woman was dying. Her baby had died at birth a few weeks previously, and since that time the mother had steadily failed. The doctor had just left her room saying emphatically that there was no hope and to give her anything she wanted.

She looked up at her agonized husband and said: "Music. I want music. I know that will cure me." The nurse thought it to be a foolhardy and useless errand, but the husband went in search of it.

The first day old familiar tunes and some of the Chopin that she had always loved, were played softly to her. Her body relaxed under the soothing influence, her nerves became less tense, her breathing deeper and more rhythmical, increasing the circulation. That night she slept. With the shutting out

of the senses to the outside world the harmonic reaction brought about by the music continued its work of healing all through the night. The next day she was visibly stronger.

An hour of good music at bedtime will so harmonize the child's consciousness that he will go to sleep happy and serene. Those thoughts will do their unfailing work of rebuilding, physically, mentally and spiritually, all through the night.

The Hindus have a morning song, a song for noon, an evening song, and a song for midnight. They have songs of praise, songs of love, songs of joy, songs of peace, and many others.

What if we were as diligent and concerned with teaching our children the language of music as we are in making sure they have mastered their multiplication facts? Harriet Seymour wrote:

"It seems extravagant to claim that, if everyone could be shown how to follow a tune and remember it, the world's unrest would be ameliorated, but it would seem to be a fact, nevertheless. Because, by doing so, each individual would become conscious of the harmony within himself."

And as Confucius taught: "Harmony has the power to draw Heaven downwards to the earth. It inspires men to love the good, and to do their duty. If one should desire to know whether a kingdom is well governed, if its morals are good or bad, the quality of its music shall furnish forth the answers."

How do you think we are doing?

VISUAL ARTS

"When you come to a full appreciation of art…you will be possessed of one of the purest, loftiest, and most ennobling pleasures the civilized world can offer you."[11]

We better be concerned if "man becomes the thing he gazes upon" as Hawthorne taught, when you consider that the

[11] John Van Dyke, *How to Judge a Picture* (1889).

American Psychiatric Society estimated that the average American child will have seen some 200,000 violent acts and 14,000 murders by the time he is 18 years old. That study was years ago. I suspect that number is much higher today. The visual impressions made on children's tender hearts last a lifetime. How many images of that which is good and truly noble will they have come in contact during the same years?

Our current culture isn't helping us to that end. We have to seek them out for ourselves, and one place we can turn is to beautiful paintings. And for young people, I can think of no better era of art than the late 1800s and early 1900s when artists celebrated and shared the simple joys of living.

It was a time when babies were seen as something precious and desirable; and mothers delighted in them. How often is this portrayed in movies or art today? Children adored their fathers and fathers adored their children. Sisters wrapped their arms around each other in affectionate hugs and brothers walked hand in hand. Here, reading is done for the sheer joy of reading. Children were happily playing together outside and given the luxury of time to enjoy the sunshine and beauties of nature. Families had joy in working and in playing together. They were even seen eating dinner together! And there was time to put your feet up and enjoy a simple conversation with your neighbors.

We need artists today who will create art like this using a diversity of culture and color of skin so that no child feels excluded from these simple joys.

We can do much to counter the vulgarity our world is offering by hanging paintings like these on the walls of our homes where they can be a quiet and steady influence and by finding other ways to get images in the view of children, even if you can but print the pictures out and tape them to your fridge.

Leonardo da Vinci said, "I hear it and it's gone. I see it, and it is there again. And again. And again…."

We have started gathering and sorting art like this at simplejoyart.com. It's a work in progress so keep checking back—it's free. All of these images are in the public domain so you can freely use them in your home.

And now if you want to discover even more beauty through art and unfold deeper layers of meaning, take the time to learn to sketch and paint. Drawing produces an exactness of thought. Once you pick up the painter's brush, you will see the world around you with new eyes.

At age 40, after a significant defeat and a forced resignation, Winston Churchill was overcome with, as he called it, "the black dog of depression and anxiety." A sister-in-law suggested he take up painting. He later wrote, "And then it was the muse of painting came to my rescue."

John Muir Laws, a world-renowned nature journalist, wrote: "Once you slow down and look long enough…mysteries will unfold before you…. When we see with clear eyes, we know that we are surrounded with beauty. Let yourself fall in love with your life by paying attention."

From time to time, take the time to sketch those masterpieces of art that strike a resonant chord in your own soul. They can be rough sketches. As you pay attention to the details, that work of art will be etched in your memory. And then, in quiet moments, you can close your eyes and stroll down the art gallery in your own heart and be fed with all its joys.

POETRY

Some years ago, my husband and I were asked to serve in an Assisted Living Facility where we became friends with Grant and Edna, both in their 90s. Edna had suffered from Alzheimers and it had been years since she recognized her husband who was her sole caregiver. Their only daughter had died in her youth. Grant with his stooped shoulders and slight frame looked frail, but he had a hidden treasure. He had a

lifetime of poetry stored in his heart, and when you would ask him to recite a poem, his blue eyes would light up and his voice would become strong.

One night we stopped to visit them in their little apartment and I asked if he had a poem for us. "Oh, yes!" he said. And off he went—"Wynken, Blynken and Nod one day sailed off in a wooden shoe." I asked if this was a poem from his childhood, and he said, "Oh no. This is the poem I have been working on for the last several weeks."

He passed away just a few days later and Edna followed shortly thereafter.

Memorizing poetry is how this poor, lonely man kept his heart from failing. And in this simple act, he had great joy.

In the Nazi death camps, Viktor Frankl observed a group of prisoners who would secretly meet to recite poetry to each other, even though they knew the penalty of being caught was death. Poetry kept them alive. Beauty was the guardian of their survival.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was working in his study one day when he heard his wife screaming. He rushed out to see her dress ablaze. She had been sealing packets of their little girls' hair and a drop of the wax had ignited her dress on fire. He tried to put the fire out with his own body, badly burning himself in the process. But it was no use. Her injuries were too great and his wife succumbed to them leaving him to raise their three little girls by himself. It was at this time in his life he threw himself into translating the poetry of Dante. And in the process, did much to heal his own broken heart.

> "O Poet, what power lies in thy magic wand! No sooner dost thou touch us, the dull gray day is aflame with color and sunshine."

Longfellow left simple instructions in how to extract the mysteries of the poet:

[R]ead from some treasured volume
The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice.

The mission of poetry is to "make glad the heart of man." It does not teach—it inspires.

Set aside time to read poetry—out loud is best—and when something strikes that resonant chord within, take the time to copy it down in your own personal anthology. And then, develop a habit of always having a poem that you are working on committing to learn "by heart." Do this, and you will have a treasure of immeasurable worth to draw upon.

STORY

Orison Swett Marden's mother died when he was three years old. His father raised his little family as best as he could in the back woods of New Hampshire, but then Orison's father died as well. He now had no home. He was separated from his sisters, this little boy of seven, and was sent to homes who took him in as the "hired boy" where he was required to work hard to earn his keep. He would pass through five such homes before striking out on his own. He was cuffed and whipped, starved, worked to the limits of human endurance, abused and insulted. There was no one to give him comfort or love or answer his questions.

And then, when he was in his early to mid-teens, he happened upon a dilapidated copy of a book stored away in an attic. It was written by a Scottish man named Samuel Smiles—the book was called *Self Help*. It was written to give hope to young people. Orison wrote: "I felt like a poor man who had just by accident discovered a gold mine." It was a book of stories; stories of great men and women who had overcome hard challenges in their lives.

These stories changed his life and healed his heart.

In wanting to pay it forward, he created a similar book for

the young people of America called *Pushing to the Front*. It became a runaway bestseller. Letters poured in from presidents like William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, the British Prime Minister William Gladstone, kings and rulers from around the world, telling him of how it had influenced their lives. A noted educator of the Italian Parliament strongly recommended the book be made obligatory reading in the schools of Italy, because he regarded it as "a civilization builder." Make note of that—stories of great lives are a "civilization builder." Thousands wrote and told how the book aroused their ambition, changed their ideals, and aims, increased their confidence, and how it had spurred them to the successful undertaking of what they before had thought impossible.

He went on to write fifty more books. Yet, for all his fame and fortune, he understood the true secrets of happiness—the true and lasting treasures of the heart—and that's what he taught and lived.

I have been immersed in a similar activity for the last fifteen years or so—and reading the stories of great lives has changed my life, as well. I have truly come to believe that our ability to maintain hope is in direct proportion to how broad and how deep our reservoir of stories is. Life is pretty rough when you are trying to operate off a mere puddle.

These great men and women are as dear friends and mentors to me. Through their stories, I find myself constantly in the company of kings and queens, poets, prophets, sages, artists, musicians, inventors, scientists, humanitarians, philanthropists, educators, writers, adventurers. "With their more appreciative souls, they have taught me to see beauty that I had previously missed." My life is richer for my association with them. They show me life through a thousand different eyes rather than through the narrow view of my own experience. There is nothing in my life that I have faced that there hasn't been someone in this company of friends to show me

how to navigate through or to just give me the courage to hang on a little longer. They inspire my heart to be better and to reach higher. When I get depressed or worried, I invite one of these friends to come over and it doesn't take long before they have lifted my spirits.

And one activity deepens the experience even more—sharing the stories with others.

"Storytelling is an ageless and beautiful art. When the lights are low and your child is in a quiet, reflective mood, the stories told him will never be forgotten and their influence will follow him the rest of his life."

Fill the childhoods of your children with stories, and you will have given them treasures far greater than silver or gold. There is no budget so tight that a child cannot be made rich with stories.

And one more thing to remember:

"It is a law of life that the only thing which we may always keep, is the thing we give. If then, the prime function of Story-telling is the giving of Joy, the Joy is the thing which the Story-teller may have."[12]

NATURE

Now that we have talked about the tools of the artist, let's look at the ideal classroom for the heart. Nature is God's university and when we spend time there, we are immersed in beauty and the music, art, poetry and story we bring with us help us unlock its mysteries.

We associate the word recreation with outdoor activities—but if you tweak the word just a bit, it's re-creation. When we spend time in nature, it's like everything within resets. We see more clearly. We feel more deeply. Nature can change us and heal our hearts.

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[12] Frances E. Foote in "The Psycho-Therapeutic Value of Story Telling," *The Storytellers' Magazine* (June 1913).

I found it interesting that Elizabeth Smart said she healed from her horrifying ordeal by spending a year riding horses on her grandfather's ranch.

Louisa May Alcott, who you know from Little Women, wrote:

"My wise mother turned me loose in the country and let me run wild, learning of Nature what no books could teach, and being led—as those who truly love her seldom fail to be—'through Nature up to Nature's God.'

"I had an early run in the woods before the dew was off the grass. The moss was like velvet, and as I ran under the arch of yellow and red leaves I sang for joy, my heart was so bright and the world so beautiful. I stopped at the end of the walk and saw the sunshine out over the wide 'Virginia meadows.'

"It seemed like going through a dark life or grave into heaven beyond. A very strange and solemn feeling came over me as I stood there, with no sound but the rustle of the pines, no one near me, and the sun so glorious, as for me alone. It seemed as if I felt God as I never did before, and I prayed in my heart that I might keep that happy sense of nearness all my life."

To that entry there is a note added, years later: "I have, for I most sincerely think that the little girl 'got religion' that day in the wood, when dear Mother nature led her to God."

"If the trees and flowers, the clouds and the wind, all tell wonderful stories to the child he has sources of happiness of which no power can deprive him."[13]

A wise man has said, "The only safety we have in the world for our children is what they build within themselves." I hope you have begun to catch the vision of how you can use the Arts to build a sanctuary; a place of refuge within your own heart and within the hearts of your children, so that no

[13] Flora J. Cooke, *Nature Myths and Stories for Little Children* (1895).

matter what is going on outside of them, their hearts will not fail them.

This is the work of the Well-Educated Heart and I invite you to join with thousands of mothers all over the world who are rediscovering the lost arts of educating the hearts of their children; who are giving them eyes to see, ears to hear and hearts to feel the beauty that surrounds all of us. You are meant to be a Mother of Influence.

Let's go back to Henry of Monmouth and his 15th century world that was crumbling around him. The passage from the book I read to you continues:

"…[T]he remedy for present evils was sought not in the creation of a new order but rather in the restoration of an old ideal. To bring back the Golden Past must be the work of a hero who could revive in his own person its virtues.

"Henry of Monmouth, deriving his inspiration from the past, was the champion of unity against the forces of disintergration."[14]

I see you mothers as today's heroes who will be the "champions of unity against the forces of disintegration" as you set your heart right. The work is done through small and simple ways.

Consider this daring experiment run in 1982 during the war between Lebanon and Israel, which was referenced by Gregg Braden in a book called "The Spontaneous Healing of Belief." Researchers trained a group of people to "feel" peace within. At appointed times on specific days of the month, these people were positioned throughout the war-torn areas of the Middle East. During the window of time when they were feeling peace, terrorist activities ceased, the rate of crimes against people went down, the number of emergency-room visits declined, and the incidence of traffic incidents declined. When the participants' feelings changed, the statistics

[14] Charles Kingsford, *Henry V* (1901).

were reversed. The study confirmed the earlier findings: When a small percentage of the population achieved peace within themselves, it was reflected in the world around them.

The study became known as the International Peace Project in the Middle East and the results were eventually published in The Journal of Conflict Resolution in 1988.

I am not concerned that our numbers may be few—I have baked enough bread to know that a little leaven can raise a whole loaf.

I look forward for the day that "will come when our children will be taught…to consider beauty as a most precious gift…and regarded as a divine instrument of education. Beauty is a quality of divinity, and to live much with the beautiful is to live close to the divine. Every beauty in any form…refines and elevates character."[15]

Now in closing, if you recall Disney's classic movie of Sleeping Beauty, Beauty had fallen asleep and when Beauty fell asleep, the kingdom grew dark and gloomy. Briers and noxious weeds and thorny vines grew around the castle. Along comes Prince Philip. He grabs his sword of Truth and his shield of righteousness—it really says that—and he fights and destroys the evil Maleficent. But it wasn't the destruction of evil that brought the kingdom back to life. The thing that brought the kingdom back to life was his love of Beauty. When Beauty received true love's first kiss, Beauty awoke and the kingdom gloriously sprang to life with Light and Color.

May the prayer of Socrates be our prayer: "I pray thee, O God, that I may be beautiful within." For then we may be assured that we will live happily ever after.

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[15] Orison Swett Marden in "Put Beauty into Life," *Success Magazine*, January 1911.



SECTION FOUR:

Heart Before Mind

What about the 3 Rs?



CREATION REQUIRES HEART AND MIND ACTING IN UNISON

"Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all." –Aristotle

Where are the writing lessons you may ask? Where is the college prep? It's everywhere! Instead of reading a dozen or more assigned books, your children are likely to have read hundreds. That's how Jefferson, Scott, Stowe, Stevenson and Tolstoy learned. And as your children read, they will have pondered and asked their own questions. Their minds will be filled with ideas and their hearts will be full of desire. The secret of their success will not be in how many things they know about, but in how many things they care about. And they'll care about a lot of things.

The Whole Apple of Learning

My mother will turn 97 in a couple of weeks. Although her eyesight and hearing are failing and her hands are crippled with arthritis, the doctors tell her she is the healthiest 97-year-old they have seen. Her mind is sharp. She is pretty amazing.

She regularly calls me and tells me all about some new advertisement she's gotten in the mail that announces a new miracle cure to fix what ails her. Usually this miracle cure is some vitamin or mineral that has been extracted out of a fruit or vegetable, put in a capsule and sold for a lot of money. And yet, every time I do the research, I find that the vitamin or mineral isn't nearly as effective without the rest of the apple; that for optimal usage, it needs to work in concert with the other minerals or the fiber or some other property of the apple.

I see that a lot in education today where the pieces are extracted from the whole. Examples of this are working on vocabulary and spelling lists, isolating a reading comprehension skill, doing map work as an isolated study, analyzing the parts instead of taking in the whole.

While this may be a common and familiar education method, how is it working for us? We are told we can judge something by its fruit. For all the time spent on reading comprehension skills, how many students will continue to read after they graduate? And what will they read? Will they choose to read great literature or history, for example? Surveys I have seen say no.

A hundred and fifty top scholars entered a nationwide contest where they were to be awarded a cash prize. Because they all had perfect scores, the committee awarding the prize

had to find some other way to differentiate. So they asked the contestants to tell of one book they had read in the past year that wasn't assigned to them. If I remember correctly, only one had done so.

It seems the more we try to isolate pieces of learning, the more we tend to get in the way. I was reading from my daughter's college children's literature textbook and it said that children who are taught to read with basal readers with controlled vocabulary learn to read much more slowly than children who are taught to read with quality literature. One study was conducted in New York's West Side. 92% of the children came from non-English speaking homes. 96% were below the poverty level and 80% spoke no English when entering school.

The study began with 225 kindergarten children who were allowed to read in an unpressured, pleasurable way; in other words, no basal readers and no workbooks. They were simply immersed in children's literature. By the end of the year, all 225 students were reading, some on a second-grade level.

Another study addressed the problem of "stalled" readers; those readers who hated reading and who for more than a year made no progress. In the study, teachers abandoned the intensive decoding programs and instead just had them listen to stories from real books. Soon, these no-progress children were off and running.

For all our focus on writing skills—the vocabulary lists and the grammar sheets and the five paragraph essays—how many adults go on to write because it's a pleasurable activity?

The same goes for science and math. Only a few students will have any desire to use this knowledge after graduation. And most of what was learned will slip away.

We don't have to teach our body what to do with an apple. All we have to do is chew on its juicy sweet deliciousness and our body breaks up its parts and makes use of its nutrients. Here are four examples of eating the whole apple of learning, taken from my daughter's college textbook:

1. Robert Howard Allen at age 6 was left to be raised by his grandfather, three great-aunts and a great-uncle who all lived in the same house in rural Tennessee. After his grandfather taught him to read, he started reading the Bible to a blind great-aunt. "From age seven he read thousands of books —from Donald Duck comics to Homer, James Joyce and Shakespeare…. He began picking up books at yard sales, and by his early 20s he had some 2000 volumes."

He never went to school, not even for a day. At age 32 he showed up at Bethel College in Tennessee and graduated three years later, summa cum laude. He then enrolled in graduate school at Vanderbilt University, earning a PhD in English. He went on to be a visiting lecturer in a college in Kentucky.

2. Lauralee Summer and her mother were homeless and moved from one shelter to another. She recalled sitting on her mother's lap and listening to stories when she was a little girl. When she was 20 months old, her mother started reading her the same book every night because it was the only book she owned—a well-thumbed book of nursery rhymes.

On her fourth birthday, Lauralee was given enough money to buy a See and Say book and taught herself to read. As they moved from town to town and shelter to shelter, she always visited the libraries. She tried school at age ten but preferred to remain at the shelter and read. In her senior year, she took the SAT and scored 1460, putting her in the top 99.7th percentile of America's high school seniors. In 1994, she was admitted to Harvard University on full scholarship.

3. Dale Wasserman is best known as the creator of Man of La Mancha. When his parents died when he was 14, he was placed in an orphanage, "undisciplined, secretive, and almost entirely unschooled." One night, in the middle of the night, he ran away and hitched his first freight train ride. For the next five years he rode the rails, never having a home, going to school, or working a steady job. This is how he described

his learning: "In the library of a small town, I would select two books, slip them under my belt, read as I rode, and slipped them back into the stack of another library in another town where I'd borrow two more."

4. Cushla Yeoman was born with multiple handicaps, mental and physical. The doctors recommended she be institutionalized. Her parents refused and instead kept her home and read picture books aloud to her, sometimes reading up to 14 books a day, week after week and month after month. By the age of five, Cushla was pronounced by doctors to be socially well-adjusted and intellectually well above average.

You may say these four cases must be exceptional, but I can give you a lot more. In fact, as I read the lives of great men and women, I see the same pattern repeated over and over again—lots of stories in childhood and lots of uninterrupted time alone with books.

Let me throw in just one more example of someone who literally ate the whole apple. Lew Wallace was a general in the Union army, and after the war he wrote a book that was the best-selling American novel of the 19th century, even outselling Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* It has been called the most influential Christian book of the 19th century—the book is *Ben-Hur*. I'll let Lew describe his own educational experience:

"I had one mainstay: I loved to read. I was a most inordinate reader. In some lines of literature, especially history and some kinds of fiction, my appetite was insatiate, and many a day, while my companions were clustered together in the old red brick schoolhouse, struggling with their problems of fractions or percentages, I was carefully hidden in the woods nearby, lying upon my elbows, munching an apple, and reveling in the beauties of Plutarch, Byron or Goldsmith."

Here are two more examples of eating the whole apple of learning. Vocabulary words are picked up ten times faster within context than when provided as separate vocabulary

lists. Also, critical thinking cannot be taught as a separate subject. As was stated in one article I read, "People who have sought to teach critical thinking have assumed that it is a skill, like riding a bicycle, and that, like other skills, once you learn it, you can apply it in any subject." Decades of cognitive research have proven that's just not the case. You learn critical thinking by immersing yourself in rich content of thought.

The best way to learn is to make learning a part of life, not separate. A child will learn fractions much more easily by measuring out ingredients for cookies or cutting pizza into six pieces and giving 1/6 of a pizza to a little sister than by working through a pile of worksheets. See how fast a child learns counting by 5s when he's adding up the nickels he's earned doing chores so he can buy a new toy. A child will learn more about trees spending time outside in nature than reading about them in a textbook and filling out a worksheet.

Telling and listening to stories, singing, playing, sharing rhymes, looking at pictures, watching sunsets and stars and chasing butterflies—this is eating the whole apple in early childhood education.

I would say the concept applies to adulthood, too. While most organizations try to solve the problem of poverty and homelessness by focusing on the pieces—helping the homeless acquire job skills or providing housing or teaching them to fill out an application—one group thought entirely out of the box.

The Clemente Project offered free college level humanities courses to homeless people with amazing success. The difference was, these courses tended to their hearts and once their hearts could see and feel, they felt empowered and they began to lift themselves out of poverty. I would call that a whole apple approach.

We have so mechanized learning it is shutting down the desire. A student spends the first twenty years of his life being told, every day, exactly what he will do and what he will learn.

The teacher asks the questions. And we see the fruit all around us: apathy, lack of curiosity, narrow mindedness.

We as a people, as has been said, are "surrounded by all stirring things, unmoved."

I'm not saying that there is not a time for detailed study. There is! Lew Wallace, once the desire was lit to start writing, took it upon himself to put himself through a rigorous course in grammar. Abraham Lincoln did the same. We're just backwards. We work from the outside in. The rule, as was taught by all the heart educators, was from within, out.

I can't help but think of possibilities when I learned of the Saracen model of education. You'll recall that when the Crusaders finally made it to the Holy Land, instead of finding a barbaric, uncivilized people, they found beautiful fountains, silks, mosaics, universities. As I read of the Saracen model of education, I found it interesting that rather than a teacher driven model, it was student led. There were no tests, no degrees, no requirements, no compulsion. Rather, a teacher would advertise a class and the students would come and sit in on the class. If the student felt like the teacher had something to offer that he was looking for, he would contract with the teacher to continue teaching him. And he stayed so long as it was of benefit to him. When he was satisfied, he left. So many of the things we enjoy had their beginnings in this air of educational freedom from the Saracen world. Freedom is a vital ingredient in a whole apple style of learning.

It is always difficult to find words to describe something you see in your heart, and I hope I'm conveying what I am seeing. But let me try one more way to describe this whole apple of learning:

My all-time favorite movie is *The Sound of Music*. I'm sure I've seen it dozens of times. In fact, our local theater ran a special screening on the big screen at the beginning of summer and I went and watched it. Twice. And then a couple of weeks later, my family took me to see a live production at the

Kennedy Center in D.C. for my birthday. I loved every second of it because every time I notice something new.

Do you remember that little thing that went around awhile ago—Everything I needed to know I learned in kindergarten? I think everything you need to know about educating hearts can be learned in the musical number, do-re-mi.

Let me show you what I mean.

The first thing Maria did was tap into a desire of the children. "Shall we learn a song to sing for your father?" And that's when they said they didn't know how to sing, but they wanted to learn because they did want to sing a song for their father because they loved him. And Maria is going to teach them to sing because it's something that has brought so much joy into her life. She wants to share the joy!

So step one in the pattern for learning: Awaken desire.

I remember being taught about alliteration in school and then working through worksheet after worksheet, identifying alliteration. Although identifying it was easy enough, I thought, who cares? And I hated it.

It was decades later, while I was reading a passage aloud and stopped to re-read it because it sounded so beautiful. Ah! That's why writers use alliteration! How different would it have been if a teacher I loved read beautiful literature first, and maybe paused and said, "Isn't that beautiful? Do you want to know what the writer did to make us feel that way?" And then taught the concept. As an isolated subject, it was dead and unappealing.

Then, let's start at the very beginning. A very good place to start.

Whenever I want to learn anything, do you know where I go first? To a children's book, because I know it will clearly lay out the basics of what I need to know. It will likely illustrate them so I can see. There's a good chance it will include a story. Pictures and story feed the heart and continue to feed that desire to want to know more. And then I can layer deep

from there. If you have older kids, even high schoolers, encourage them to not be too quick to pass up or too proud to read the children's books. I remember hearing a very wise and well learned man—a scholar—who said this was his method of learning. And in fact, when he needed to nourish his soul and relax, he would turn to a children's book. The beginning is a very good place to start.

Next: When you read, you begin with ABC. When you sing, you begin with do-re-mi.

Here she's tying into the familiar. Learning to read by learning their abc's was an activity they had all experienced, so now they could understand that do-re-mi was simply an alphabet for singing. Providing many experiences to connect to, and then finding ways to connect to that which has been experienced, is a key component of learning success. Always be on the lookout for those familiar connections.

The first three notes just happen to be do-re-mi.

Sometimes facts are just facts and you just need to accept them for the time being. The first three numbers just happen to be 1 2 3. The capital of our nation just happens to be Washington, D.C. Later, they may learn how Washington, D.C. came to be our capital and how the first three notes came to be do-re-mi, but for now, we can move forward by just accepting the fact. Let's not get bogged down.

Then Maria models all the notes in the scale—do re mi fa so la ti—and notices they're not getting it, so says, "Hmm. Let's see if I can make this easier." She thinks for a second, looking for an illustration, and then begins to connect each of the notes to something that is familiar to them.

> Do, a deer a female deer.
> Re, a drop of golden sun.

And so forth.

Notice the joy on their faces as she connects to things that are familiar to them. First, they listen and then she repeats.

Repetition is also a vital part of the learning process. None of us pick up the whole of anything on the very first try. I can read the same book over and over again, and each time pick up something new. Or watch a movie, for instance over and over again. Even dozens of times. Who would do that, right? That's why I encourage you to consider using the rotation schedule. It allows you to pass by the same subjects many times, each time gathering something new.

So, next time through, Marie lets them take turns saying just the notes, and she sings the part that's connected to that note. As they become more confident, they join in more until she sits back and watches them sing the whole thing on their own.

Pay attention to the fact that they are learning to sing by singing. We learn to do by doing. We learn to cook by cooking. We learn to write by writing. We learn to read by reading. My son-in-law loves to play board games and he's always finding new ones. If he sits down and tries to explain the whole objective of the game and all the rules upfront, I'm totally lost. The way I learn to play new games is that we start playing, and along the way, in the time I need to know, I pick up all the rules and strategies. At first, we take it slow and then after a couple of times of playing, I'm ready. That's a whole apple way of learning.

How much of teaching are you trying to do by explaining rather than doing?

And, again, notice the joy and variety of the learning process as they march around the hillside and dance around the city as they practice their new skill?

Now they are ready for the next layer, that of tools and rules.

"Now, children do-re-mi-fa-so and so on are only the tools we use to build a song." Once you have the notes in your head, you can sing a million different tunes by mixing them up! Here is fruit to the learning. They didn't learn the notes just for the

sake of learning the notes, they learned them because now they are going to be able to sing a million different songs!

You didn't learn how to read words just so you can read words, you're now going to be able to mix those words up and read a million different stories; you're going to be able to write a million different things!

And she begins to model what she's talking about and has them repeat what they hear her sing. And I can't help but see the looks of love and adoration the children have for Maria. They willingly follow her because she loves them and they love her. Her love for singing is contagious. I see two principles from Dr. Neufeld's talk: You cannot parent a child whose heart you do not have and the young seek for something to attach to, and once it attaches, it grows to be like that to which it is attached.

Look at all the smiles!

Then, more practice, more repetition in a lot of different settings. Look at the creative process unfold—they've been given raw materials and are now organizing it all in new and endless ways. And the learning continues to layer until by the end of the number, they're singing in harmony and confidence.

What is the fruit of all that learning? Music changes the atmosphere of their home. It touches their father's heart and heals their relationship and heals his heart. They now have a skill that brings opportunity and meaning to their lives with all its variety. Their learning has born good fruit.

Now let's learn Do-Re-Mi curriculum style.

"Children, today we are going to start learning the eight notes of the scale." Notice, they're not given a reason or a desire. What I see too often are kids showing up and being handed the day's learning assignment. "The first note of the scale is do. I will write do on the board for you to see. And now, please copy it in your notebooks. Your homework tonight is to copy *do* ten times in your best handwriting."

Day 2. "The second note of the scale is Re. Will you say that with me? This is how you write Re. I need you to copy it 5 times. Now, tonight, your assignment is to write a story, using Re as your protaganist. You will be marked down for misspelled words."

Day 6. "The 6th note of the scale is La. This is how you write La. Please copy it in your notebook. Your assignment is to write a five-sentence paragraph on how you feel about La." Now, I don't know about you, but other than the fact that La is the note to follow So, I don't know much else about it. Certainly not five sentences worth. And I actually have no feelings about it. I couldn't care less. I'm afraid some of the writing assignments we give to kids feels just like that to them. And then we say they don't like to write! Or they can't write.

I was talking to my daughter who had a conversation with another mom who was tearing her hair out over her little boy. He had one simple little assignment he had to do. All he had to do was write a five-sentence paragraph and he balked and pouted and cried all day long and she was so frustrated. It was so simple! Why was he being so stubborn? Well, I suspect it was the La thing.

"Now children. Study these eight notes you have learned because you will be tested on Friday and you'll be expected to put them in order."

Monday rolls around. "Today, children, we are going to begin to learn time signatures."

Be still my little heart! It's this mechanization of learning that is getting in the way of developing imagination—that thinking of the heart.

I know I'm exaggerating, but this is how learning felt to me in my school years. I wish I could find the exact quote, but I read someone say recently that we have built the biggest system of schooling wherein our children spend all their days reading the menu without ever actually getting to taste the food. I think that's a good description.

Learning by heart is a joyful experience. Eat the whole apple of learning.

Let me close with the words of an old 1805 hymn with some good reminders for well-educated hearts:

> Know this, that every soul is free to choose his life and what he'll be.
> For this eternal truth is giv'n: That God will force no man to heav'n.
>
> He'll call, persuade, direct aright, and bless with wisdom, love and light,
> In nameless ways be good and kind, But never force the human mind.

Let Them Eat Cake

Learning the heart-based way is a piece of cake. If your children are hungry, would you feed them a cup of flour or a spoonful of salt or baking soda? Would you offer them a teaspoon of vanilla or a couple tablespoons of vinegar? Do you think they would like you to give them a stick of butter to suck on? And even if they love sugar and chocolate, would you sit them down to a bowlful of sugar or half a cup of unsweetened cocoa, even if you stirred the two together?

Of course not. But if you take all those ingredients which are totally unappetizing individually, stir them all together in a 9x13 pan, and bake them in an oven for 30 minutes, you'll have the most delicious moist chocolate cake to serve them. And I guarantee they'll ask for more.

It's become the way of education to serve learning by individual ingredients: vocabulary lists, spelling lists, plot, phonics, setting, rules of grammar, alliteration, onomatopoeia, facts to memorize. And it's making our young children lose their appetites. But serve them stories, songs, poetry, pictures, and allow generous portions of play time, they're not only going to keep coming back for more, you are going to find their heart and your heart wrapping around each other and attaching to each other. If you are the one who administers the daily dose of vinegar, they're going to run when they see you coming!

When they get a little older and want to bake their own cake, then they're going to want to know all the individual ingredients because they've already tasted the cake and it was delicious.

There is a time for academics, but childhood is not that time.

THREE BEARS CAKE

Put the following in an ungreased 9x13 baking dish:

2¼ c. flour
1½ c. sugar
4½ T. cocoa
1½ tsp. baking soda
¼ tsp salt.

Mix with a fork.

Make three holes: a papa size hole, a mama size hole, and a wee little baby hole. In the papa bear hole, pour 1 cube of melted butter. In the mama bear hole, pour 1½ T. vinegar and in the baby bear hole, pour 1½ tsp. vanilla. Quickly dump 1½ c. cold water over it all. Stir quickly with a fork until it is well mixed.

Bake at 350 degrees for 25-30 minutes. Cool and serve from the pan.

What About Math?

So, you may be saying, that's great about all this story, art, poetry and music stuff. But what about Math?

I find it interesting as I observe homeschool moms that they are careful and troubled about many things, and Math seems to be at the top of the list. Never mind is your child happy? Is he kind? Do you have a good relationship with him? No, it's, "Oh my goodness, my son or daughter is in the 3rd grade and hasn't mastered multiplication tables," and it sets off a panic attack.

I think the reason we place so much emphasis on Math is because it's one of those clearly defined benchmarks. Many moms who choose to homeschool feel a lot of pressure to measure up to the outside world looking on, and math is one of those measurable subjects. If a child can do math above grade level, she sighs a sense of relief that she's not ruining her children and maybe even has a gifted one on her hands. But heaven help the child who is running below level in math. I'm a failure! Maybe I should just give up and put my child back in school.

But it's just math.

And although today's world would have you think that the whole future of civilization rests upon our kids' math scores, it simply isn't true.

Now, you may be one of the moms who has it all under control. Yay for you! But for you other moms who are trying to navigate the waters, let me try and widen some perceptions here.

I encourage you to spend some time in the Math section

of the Mother's University. At the top of the list of questions we should be asking, I would choose, "Why study math at all?"

First, let me insert here some inspirational words from Galileo: "Mathematics is the language in which God has written the universe."

If you had a bad experience with math in school, you are now free to see it with new eyes and a sense of wonder right along with your children. That's the heart part of studying math.

I recommend, if you haven't watched it yet, start with the TED talk by a High School math teacher where he addresses our question of why study math at all.

Then move to the articles you'll see linked on the page, starting with *Why Johnny Can't Add*. This was written by the son of an aerospace engineer. Because his dad worked on top-secret projects, he had no idea what his dad did. He found out later that his dad had designed the first anti-ballistic missile in the United States and he was involved in other space projects. The tinkering his dad would do at the kitchen table or out in the garage late at night was how he was solving complex issues that involved precise mathematical computations.

Surely his brilliant father must have had an intense math program growing up!

Actually, no. His family was dirt poor and he attended a small one-room school that didn't have enough money to even supply the students with books. So the full extent of math instruction consisted of memorizing addition and subtraction, multiplication and division facts through drill and practice. He didn't even hear the word "calculus" until he got to college. He said that that was the education of most of the engineers of that early space program. There was no PhD in physics or advanced mathematics. He got a bachelors in Ceramic Engineering and took as many math classes as he could because he had an interest.

Arithmetic wasn't some mysterious subject that was difficult to comprehend. It was presented as a tool.

There's lots of good food for thought in that article.

Then take a look at *Just Do the Math*. Dan Greenburg is a co-founder of the Sudbury school. The simple premise behind the teaching of subjects is to wait until a child asks for it and has a use for it, even if it is just college admission.

He wrote a book about a little experiment, claiming he could teach students the entire K-6 math portfolio in just 20 contact hours. He had a dozen children, ages 9 to 12 and there was one rule: Be on time. 11 am sharp, twice a week, for half an hour. If anyone was five minutes late, class was cancelled. If it happened twice, no more teaching.

Using just an old 1898 math primer, in 20 hours, every single student knew the material. Every single one.

He said math isn't a hard subject. What's hard—virtually impossible—is beating it into the heads of youngsters who hate every step.

Then follow it up by reading the Benezet experiment, which also showed that it's not necessary to spend years pounding math into kids. This particular teacher suggested an experiment in which is waited to start math instruction until the 6th grade. The principal got nervous and he had to end the experiment a little earlier than that, but his students not only passed up the kids who had been drilled since kindergarten, they easily surpassed them going forward.

Then I linked a great article by Heidi Nash on how to inspire a love of math. There's the heart part of math—creating the desire. And then teaching the facts, as these previous articles show, can be done without tears and in a much shorter amount of time than we tend to make it.

Become aware of natural ways to make numbers and math a useful part of life. When you play games with your little kids that require rolling of dice and moving their little figures on the board, they get lots of practice counting and adding up

numbers in a useful way. That's math. When you cook, you're introducing fractions with your quarter cup measures and your teaspoons of measurement. Same as when you cut a pizza into six pieces and give one sixth of it to your brother. How long will it take a child to learn to count by 5s if you pay him for some work with nickels in anticipation of saving up for something he really wants?

Math is useful! And that is the impression little children need.

The Rhythm of Life is a Powerful Beat

The freedom to explore and discover, to ask our own questions, to pursue a deeper study of that which has sparked an interest is a vital part of educating hearts. I have likened it to the experience of the Escape Room. What joy is there in simply carrying out someone else's instructions? Sure. Everyone would escape if you were told just what to do; there would be no child left behind. But who cares?

Like Abraham Lincoln suggested—require a man to produce a bale of hay, and he will produce one bale of hay. Show him the whole field and tell him he can keep the profit of his own work, and he will produce ten bales.

The spirit of compulsion stifles progress and joy.

Yet, the idea of allowing that kind of freedom to learn is scary to a lot of moms. I have heard from many moms that if they don't carefully plan their days, they lose control and their house becomes chaotic. Or they tell me if they give their children freedom, their kids won't do anything. Their kids aren't going to spontaneously do their chores or practice their musical instrument or learn grammar. They have to require these things of them; they say that their children rise to the expectations placed upon them. Others say that when they try to allow that much freedom, they feel like they aren't accomplishing anything. It's hard to trust the process when the progress isn't measurable.

There has been quite a bit of discussion on the topic of inspiring vs. requiring in our Facebook group with strong arguments on both sides. I have thought about it a lot and

would like to offer some thoughts to consider.

Music provided the clear answer to me.

There's a catchy little song from an old musical, *Sweet Charity,* that makes me so happy, for awhile I made it the ring tone on my phone. Part of the lyrics are:

The rhythm of life; it's a powerful beat.

Music is made up of melody—that's the part we hum—the rhythm or the beat and harmony. The deepest feelings in music are stirred by the harmony which is what happens when more than one note is played at the same time. The rhythm is what keeps the music moving forward. It's the order and control part of the music much like the laws are what keeps order in a free society.

Keeping rhythm in its proper place is how you'll feel like you are progressing and will also help you to relax so that you can trust the process that requires the atmosphere of freedom and choice.

Let's first explore the power of rhythm, and then I'll offer some practical ideas and cautions for implementing it.

Stand up and try to walk across the room out of rhythm. Or try and say something out of rhythm.

Unless you have some kind of neurological disorder—there's an interesting word for this—disorder—it is going to be practically impossible for you to do either of these seemingly simple tasks.

We are designed as rhythmical human beings. Have you ever noticed how, when you are in a large group of people and you start applauding, if you do it long enough, you start clapping together in sync?

We breathe in and breathe out in rhythm. Our hearts beat in rhythm. In fact when my heart started skipping beats, my doctor put me in an ambulance and sent me to the hospital. An out of rhythm heartbeat is not something you mess around with. But the interesting thing is so long as it does its work in rhythm, we don't have to give breathing or beating

hearts a single thought. They just do their thing automatically and we can go about doing our thing. On the other hand, if they stop doing their thing, we die.

The sun rises and sets in rhythm. The seasons cycle—Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter in rhythm. The planets orbit in rhythm. The majesty of the universe and its perfect order is tied into its rhythm.

Rhythm or the beat in music not only maintains order it's what keeps the music moving along.

It is that inclination towards rhythm that makes buying a curriculum so appealing. Every day, everything is carefully laid out for us and we just have to move through what is set before us. I hear it all the time, "I need to stay in control or everything will fall apart." So moms make careful lesson plans so that their days can unfold somewhat automatically. They don't have to think about what they're doing. It's all planned out in the rhythm of the day. And often kids will settle into the routine. Rhythm gives you a sense of order and control and keeps things moving along.

I had an interesting experience during the covid lockdown. Maybe I should say a revelatory experience. Every Sunday for my whole life, I've put on a Sunday dress and have gone to church. It's part of the rhythm of my life. As part of that worship service, I partake of the Sacrament. Singing hymns is part of that worship experience.

For several months during the covid lockdown, that Sabbath rhythm was disrupted. Church was canceled. Sunday grew to look like every other day of the week. And something strange happened—I started to question things in my faith I had never questioned before. And I noticed people who I knew well were doing the same thing and I watched a number of them leave the faith of their childhoods, something I couldn't have imagined of them.

And I prayed, Heavenly Father, what is going on? With that prayer in my heart, I was downstairs by my bookshelves

and was drawn to a book I didn't even know I owned. It was a book written about the early Christian church after the time of the Apostles. It says the Christian church was divided into two camps. There was the one side heavily influenced by Jewish tradition that held fast to the idea that rites and rituals and traditions and ordinances were vital to the faith. They loved to adhere to the letter of the law. The other group was more the let's just go meet together out in the fields and love God and love each other. And I thought, well that's really me. That sounds good to me.

But the next morning when I woke up, the thought came to go back and read what happened to the two groups.

Which group do you think lasted?

It was the first group that eventually grew to be the Catholic Church which is still going strong after 2,000 years. The Catholic Church leans heavily on rites and traditions. The other group died away after about 200 years, and in other research, I found they actually adopted beliefs that were contrary to their original beliefs. For example, Luciferianism traces its roots to this group of believers.

My thoughts then turned to the Jews. It's remarkable to think that this group of people has maintained its identity for thousands of years even in a scattered and persecuted condition. Their hunger to return to their homeland has never left them. That's miraculous! I think we can safely say they owe it to the rhythm of their faith—their traditions, their holidays, their daily readings of the Torah.

As restrictions were lifted and I returned to weekly church attendance and weekly partaking of the Sacrament, I noticed how it anchored my soul. I still have many questions, but I am able to pursue the answers without feeling like I'm freefalling through space.

The rhythm of life is most certainly a powerful beat. It sustains and grounds us. It helps us maintain a sense of order and control in our lives.

You might be saying what's wrong with that?

Well, there's a problem with strong repetitive beat. It shuts down thinking and feeling. It puts us on auto-pilot mode. Think what happens when you start counting sheep, slowly and rhythmically—we fall asleep. I can put people to sleep with my therapeutic harp by repetitive patterns. I've talked about a young man from Sierra Leone I went to listen to. He had been abducted as a young boy and forced to become a boy soldier. The way they turned them into killers was to blast loud rock music with its repetitive beat day and night until they were so numb they would go out and do horrible deeds.

One of the common complaints about curriculum is that, over time, you burn out. You kind of feel dead inside and just start going through the motions. Many curriculum users can hardly wait for the school year to end. Curriculum often kills a love of learning precisely because you are on a sort of auto-pilot. Its steady rhythm lulls you to sleep. It crushes the excitement and adventure of learning. There is little freedom for exploration and discovery. You may achieve your objectives, but at what price?

I was talking to my youngest daughter one day and complaining about modern music. I told her it is so repetitive. It's four chords and a beat played out over and over. I was raised in melodies and key changes and such a variety of chord progressions. I asked her where's the melody? Where's the part I'll go away humming? What can I harmonize?

And she said, "Mom, we're listening for the beat. We want to feel the beat. We're not listening for melody."

I talked about that with my harp teacher one day who is teaching me to use the harp in healing settings. She reflected that our world has become so chaotic and that we have so lost our moral footing that our young people are trying to anchor themselves somewhere. It's the repetitive beat of rock music that gives them a sense of order and control. But it's not

without consequence. I added maybe the strong repetitive beat is in a way numbing them; maybe they are rocking themselves to sleep in the face of so many dangers.

So let's pull this back to you and the learning environment you are trying to create in your home and in your life. I hope you can begin to see that you can use rhythm in your favor to keep things moving along and to keep some kind of order and control in your life. But I also hope you can see the caution. Never allow it to dominate and drown out the melody of your learning—the song of the heart. Use it sparingly, just enough to keep things humming along, but not so much that it has a deadening effect. Systems are great for machines. But we aren't machines. We are artists at heart and artists need the free expression of what is in their hearts.

Establishing rhythm is where requiring is appropriate and in many cases, necessary. So take a look at your day and ask yourself what needs to be on auto-pilot? The habit of making our beds every morning, the habit of brushing our teeth or putting our clothes in the laundry basket. We don't want to think about those things. We don't want to wait until we feel like doing them—we just do them.

So yes! Chores and habits are certainly on the list of requirements and expectations. Often chore charts and rewards will help get the habit in place until it becomes an unthinking part of the day.

Routines fall in the same category. Nighttime routines of brushing teeth, reading stories, turning on some music to listen to also are very calming and bring a sense of order in our lives and especially in the lives of our children.

I have a routine and a habit of daily scripture reading. I haven't missed a day in close to 40 years. It's like a lifeline to God. I don't always engage in what I'm reading. Sometimes I just open my scriptures by the side of my bed and read a random verse. But it's a habit that has been an anchor to me. Daily scripture reading with your kids can be part of this

rhythm of life.

So think of those things that are things that need to be done and work to establish them as habit and routine. This is where requiring is appropriate. Putting dishes in the sink after dinner. Practicing a musical instrument. Memorizing a poem can be made a habit and part of the requirements you establish in your home.

Academic skills like memorizing math facts or practicing handwriting can be made a part of the "require" part of your day. But keep that caution in mind—if you allow the habit to dominate, you may kill a love of the thing that they are doing.

There are a few things you can do to soften the effect. One is to utilize choice whenever possible. For instance, you may require your child to practice handwriting every day, but you can give him the choice of when to do it, probably not on a daily basis, but let him make the initial decision of where he wants to anchor it. Right after lunch? Right after breakfast? You may have to try out a few spots to see where it works best. If a child is super reluctant, you can even give him the choice of how long. If he says one minute, put the timer on for one minute. One minute is better than no minutes, and it's the habit you are going for because this is a skill that needs developing.

Another way is to use Art to sweeten it. Put some favorite music on in the background. You may establish a certain time for read-aloud, but let your children engage in quiet play or handicrafts while they listen. I hope you get the idea.

And don't discount the power of love in sweetening the task. You can make chore time a drudge or lighten up by having fun together while working. The chores have to be done, but you don't have to be miserable while you're doing them.

In music, there are three anchor tones in every scale. Music is always searching to land on these anchor tones. And then it feels at rest.

A very easy way to add a rhythm to your day is to make sure you have three meals a day. Or if that's too much, at least try for dinner. And then attach one of these rhythm activities to the meal. Then they are likely to get done.

A little every day is all you need to develop academic skills in younger years. I was told Charlotte Mason taught that ten minutes of practice in each of the basic academic skills is sufficient. Your children don't need to spend the hours and hours that most curriculums demand of them.

Neither do they need the hours upon hours of information that is dumped into their brains that they haven't asked for, nor do they know what to do with it. Therefore, most of the information delivered through curriculum will just wash away. I believe there are much more important ways to spend our time.

The rotation schedule is also designed to add the necessary rhythm to make progress in learning. Music is divided into measures and within each measure are a certain number of beats, designated at the beginning of the music. But within each measure is a lot of freedom in how those beats are going to be used. So let's say the music is based on four beats to a measure. You might rest the whole four beats in that measure—not play anything—and then pick up with more notes in the next measure. It didn't matter that nothing was played—the rhythm of the music keeps the music moving along and doesn't bring everything to a stand still if you happen to stop playing.

Maybe the next time that particular phrase is played, the measure that rested four counts before will now be filled with 32 32nd notes and even some trills thrown in or a whole glissando. Even if you don't know musical terms, I hope you can see that you can fit a lot of notes into four beats.

This is how I picture the rotation schedule moving along your study of the whole world and everything in it. (You will learn more about the rotation in Section 5.) Maybe the first

time through the rotation, your melody is very simple. Maybe you only get to one story the whole month. And the next month you have a baby and you read no stories. It's like a whole note rest. But you keep moving through the rotation eventually, adding in what you can. Maybe you'll only manage some music or look at some art. It's OK. The rhythm will keep you moving along and keep you from feeling like you have failed.

I am also encouraging you to add reading the Forgotten Classics Family Library as part of the rhythm of your day. The law of the harvest is in play. You cannot grow a garden from seeds that have never been planted. So you want to make sure you have scheduled seed planting in your day. It doesn't need to take up a long time—even 20 or 30 minutes a day will yield a large harvest. You can even sow the seeds ten minutes here and ten minutes there. I would place establishing a time for the Forgotten Classics falls in the category of requiring. But definitely soften it by allowing choice and wrapping it with love.

Why do I place such importance on the Forgotten Classics? I've likened these stories to the gold nuggets that have remained when the dust of the ages blows away. They can also be likened to heirloom seeds.

Notice the word heirloom—an heir refers to someone who has the rights of inheriting wealth. That is you and me. We are inheriting the riches of the past. Loom refers to a weaving machine; of having something woven into fabric. I would say the living ideas in these stories are being woven into the fabric of our thoughts and our lives and if they are carefully tended and cultivated, they will eventually bear much fruit in our lives.

So what makes heirloom seeds so special?

Better Homes and Gardens has the answer, but as I go through it, change the word "seed" to "story" in your mind and you'll understand why the Forgotten Classics are worth

making the center of your garden.

Growing heirloom seeds in your garden can literally bring the past to life. These are seeds that have been saved for centuries. They've been around for awhile because they have unique and special characteristics people want. They have been saved to make sure desirable plants would be around from year to year—handing down through generations.

They have colorful pasts. For instance, you might trace a seed back to Thomas Jefferson's day and find him planting the same seed as you are.

Heirloom seeds are time-tested. If people bothered to save a particular seed for posterity, you know it was something special.

Heirloom seeds have passed the ultimate quality tests because of their exceptional flavor, beauty or hardiness.

They are prized for their deliciousness and resistance to disease.

Hybrid seeds happen because people get involved. The problem is the seeds of hybrids don't usually produce seeds that will produce a plant with the same characteristic as the original.

These older, tried and true varieties open up a world of rich flavors, unique colors, and other outstanding characteristics that make them the treasure they are.

Some come in packages pretty enough to be considered art. Organizations make sure they are distributed widely.

The Forgotten Classics Family Library provides the spine of learning in the new website. I would recommend setting aside time in the morning when hearts and minds are fresh and open. An ounce of morning is worth a pound of afternoon.

Call it your world adventure time. Make it exciting. Sell your children on the idea of heirloom seeds.

It may seem impossible to make it through the whole library. But I sat down and figured it out one day—if you only

spend 20 or 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week, during the normal 12 years of a child's school days, you will get through all of them. Of course, the older they get, the longer they can read. So it's really not an impossible undertaking.

And even though you may "require" the time as part of your rhythm, let your children be part of the decision process of what to read as much as you can. The Reading Records we have provided serve as a menu you can reference and see what sparks an interest and you can keep track of where you've been. If you have independent readers, you can even set the timer for a set time—20 or 30 minutes—so you are requiring the time, but you are letting them choose how to spend that time.

You will notice that the Forgotten Classics are now arranged developmentally in our site. Which books should you start with? You start at the very beginning and make your way through, no matter how old your kids are. I don't know how to make it simpler than that. Not that you have to read through the books cover to cover. They're not designed for that. They are designed for exploration and discovery. Allowing the freedom to choose and the inherent pleasure of stories will keep the rhythmic beat from drowning out the song. If you make your way through the library, you will have made your children familiar with the whole world and everything in it. It lays a foundation for a lifetime of learning.

These small and simple things have now given you just enough rhythm to help you feel that you are making progress and not freefalling. But notice the rhythm takes up only a small amount of time in your day. You have now freed up the bulk of your day for the freedom to explore and discover and ask your own questions and go down your own rabbit holes and grow hobbies and practice musical instruments and read books that grab your interest and visit interesting places and lay out in the backyard and dream while the clouds float overhead and make memories. There's time for playing and talking

to friends and visiting the lonely neighbor down the street. With this simple rhythm in place, you can be more spontaneous and life's interruptions won't derail you. The essentials are on auto-pilot and now you can relax because you know the rhythm will keep you moving forward. And you'll know that you are progressing even when the outside world thinks all you are doing is "nothing but play."

It's called the song of life. And you never want the rhythm to drown out its melody. Which brings me to one more lesson from music.

It is the harmony in music that stirs the deepest feelings. Harmony is where two or more notes are played together. You can harmonize a melody, but you cannot harmonize a beat. If the beat of learning is all you have, it is dead. If you have drowned out the song with strong repetitive beat, especially a strong academic beat, you will be left with nothing to harmonize. Even the arts can be delivered on auto-pilot and you can kill the very spirit that is meant to give life. So be careful in your use of rhythm.

Here is an example of harmony in learning. I had a mom tell me her mother read Mother Carey's Chickens and loved it. She noticed that another book was mentioned several times—a book written by Charles Kingsley called *The Water Babies*. So she found that book and read it and it expanded and deepened her understanding and appreciation for the first book. The two books in harmony was a much deeper and richer experience than either book alone.

This is the layering experience I keep talking about. This is the harmony of learning and is talked about elsewhere.

Maybe the short answer to all of this is that the heart can only be inspired. It cannot be compelled or forced or required. You cannot require desire or creativity or imagination or love. You can only inspire it. Inspiring hearts is the focus of the Well-Educated Heart. We use the Arts to do our work of inspiration.

But the mind with its rules and skills is necessary for order. The mind, as I define it, provides the rhythm for life. And it is a powerful beat. Use it to your advantage. But don't let it rule your life.



SECTION FIVE:

The Grand Buffet

What resources and tools
do I have to work with?



THE DIRECTION OF GROWTH IS INWARD-OUT.

"A rosebud blooms from the pressure of an inner fulness."

Just as you will get a different result from eating a diet of French fries and chocolate milk shakes than you will get from a diet of fruits and vegetables, so will the heart respond according to the quality of food it is fed. A Grand Buffet of quality heartwarming food has been prepared for your use. New dishes are added regularly. Sample and taste just as you would at the finest buffet restaurant, then return to those dishes you find the most appealing. Do revisit the buffet often and try new gourmet dishes as your taste becomes more refined. The purpose of this section is to take you on a complete tour of the Grand Buffet you'll find at librariesofhope.com. Don't gulp your food—savor and enjoy the flavors. And please allow time for digestion! There's a LOT there, but it's all delicious and made with the finest ingredients. You will also find ideas for organizing your learning.

Developmental Levels

Before I talk about many of the resources available for you to use, it will be helpful to talk about developmental levels and the rotation schedule that everything is designed around in our Libraries of Hope website.

If you want to build a strong root system in a child's heart, the heart educators taught that a child must progress through three developmental learning stages, each one serving a specific purpose. To some extent, you can go back and pick up what was missed, but you can't rush the process going forward. Nor would you want to. As I go through this, you'll notice the layering process. Heart-based education is very much a line upon line, layer upon layer, here a little, there a little process which is very different from acquiring facts and information.

The first step is the Familiar Stage and in the learning process, you always need to find or create a familiar link to build upon. My kids tease me because I still use AOL and Word Perfect. I know—I'm a dinosaur. They tell me there are much better options out there, but I resist them because AOL and Word Perfect are familiar to me and it's human nature to resist that which is not familiar to us. Little children demand the same story be read to them over and over again because of its familiarity and babies cling to mama because she is familiar. A child will resist a subject that has no familiar connections. Attention, desire, interest and enjoyment all depend upon recognition of familiar qualities.

Let me illustrate with a couple of stories.

Last December, my daughter's family was learning about

16. 'The Beginning' of Learning
15. Classic Lit., i.e., The Great Books
14. Threads: Art, Music, Architecture, Religion, Science
13. Moral Heroes
12. Stories of Nations
11. History like Landmarks, Signature Biographies, etc.
10. Historical Fiction
9. Short Picturesque Stories
8. Epic and Legendary Heroes, i.e., King Arthur

HEROIC

7. Famous Childhoods, child life in far away lands
6. Children's Classics, i.e., The Secret Garden, A Little Princess
5. Fairy Tales, Mythology

IMAGINATIVE

4. Transitional Stories – part familiar, part imaginative, i.e., Raggedy Ann
3. Short Repetitive Stories, i.e., The Three Bears, also family/nature
2. Picture Books
1. Mother Goose
0. Lullabies

FAMILIAR

George Washington, and she suggested a couple of biographies to her oldest daughter. One was about George and the other one was about Martha. The books sat unread. Then I took my granddaughter up to Mt. Vernon. It was just before Christmas so there weren't many people there and we rocked in the rocking chairs on the veranda and watched the boats out on the Potomac and our hearts knew why Washington loved the place so much. Then our tour guide took us to the second floor to Washington's bedroom. We saw the very bed he died in. She told us that, after he died, Martha was so broken hearted, she closed the door to the bedroom, locked it and never went in again. Then the guide took us to the third floor where visitors usually aren't allowed to go and showed us the little bedroom Martha spent her last few years in. Outside her bedroom was a small round window. The day they buried her husband, the tour guide told us that she sat and looked out that very window because she couldn't bear to go down. As we looked out the window, we could see the vault where his body was originally laid and imagined the sorrowful scene. We did far more "feeling" than "talking."

My daughter told me later, without any urging on her part, that after my granddaughter got home, she had both biographies read by the next night and commented that she wished she had read them before she went to Mt. Vernon, and she now wanted to go back.

This is the attraction of the familiar.

My little 2-year-old grandson has been sick so he's been a bit cranky. A couple of nights ago, his daddy went to read him a bedtime story. Do you want to hear the story of Mulan? NO! Do you want to hear the story of the Mouse and Cookies? NO! Do you want to hear the story of the Little Mermaid? NO! Do you want to hear the story of the little boy who could only say No?

Huh? And he listened attentively while his daddy made up a story of a little boy who could only say no.

He had connected to the familiar of the moment.

Your wonderful and enjoyable job as a mom is to make as many unfamiliar things familiar to your children as you can because then you've given them many connecting links for learning to take place. You can familiarize things by naming them, telling stories about them and bringing your child in contact with them.

The first five years of a child's life are primarily for familiarizing your child with the immediate world he lives in. A toddler becomes familiar with the world he lives in by touching, tasting, hearing, smelling and seeing and the more connections to the real world you give him, the stronger foundation for future learning you are laying. I've always found it interesting to watch how connected to true things children are. I can give a child a bright neon colored plastic toy to play with, and his attention lasts about three seconds. But if I put him next to mud or grass or water or sand, his attention is held for a very long time.

The first language you have to work with is music. Your lullabies to a newborn bring a sense of calm and comfort to his heart. Both the language of words and the language of music are acquired by exposure, so do play beautiful classical music in your home so it will become familiar to him. And sing songs.

There is also a music to spoken language. In the beginning, a child isn't listening for the meaning of words. He's listening to the music. One of the reasons preschoolers can effortlessly pick up several languages simultaneously is because he's not encumbered by verb conjugations and tenses; he's listening to the music of the language and mimicking it. The reason that reading aloud to your children is so important is because the music in your voice adds a layer of meaning that their hearts understand. For example, take the little two letter word "oh." It's not a difficult word to read. But try to say that little word as a question, as an exclamation of surprise,

or as an expression of disappointment. Listen as the music of your voice gives three meanings to the word that only your heart can decipher.

Much of the deepest meaning of great literature is found in the music of the words and so you want to familiarize your little ones with beautiful language. There are few books in the English language that does this as perfectly as the King James Version of the Bible. Scholars tell us this was written at the peak of the English language. It's full of poetry, imagery and story. Feel the difference between these two passages of scripture. The first one is from the King James Version:

"And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him. And there came a voice from the heavens saying, 'Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'"

Now listen to a modern version:

"As he was climbing up the bank again, the sun shone through a gap in the clouds. At the same time a pigeon flew down and perched on him. Jesus took this as a sign that God's spirit was with him. A voice from overhead was heard saying, 'That's my boy! You're doing fine.'"

Could you feel the difference?

When you read scriptural language to little children, they're understanding it at a different level than you. I have found little children are drawn to scriptural language. My personal opinion is they're hearing a familiar language carried with them that has not yet been completely forgotten. Its familiarity is a heavenly music. Much of the meaning of literature they'll read later will come from the music of the words. Familiarizing them with beautiful language lays the groundwork.

It's the music of words that make Mother Goose so delightful to children. The words are mostly nonsense. That's not what they're listening for. You may not think it, but by giving your one-year-old Mother Goose, you're preparing him

to one day love Homer. And that's not as in Homer Simpson. It's the other Homer. And rhyme begins to bring order to your baby's brain.

As you continue up this developmental ladder and begin to introduce your little ones to art, poetry and story, you want to apply this familiar principle to the subjects you choose. What's more familiar to a little child than family and home, nature and animals? I think it's worth paying attention to the fact that the Old Testament opens with a story of a family in a garden and the New Testament begins with a story of a family in a stable surrounded by animals. Familiar and Family have the same root words. And you will want to make all things family familiar to your little ones in these first five years. I'll also mention here, there is a heart-based way to learn Science, too, and stories of Nature begin to grow the root system for that.

The next language is pictures or images. Why do toddlers love picture books? Because they speak to their hearts; it's a language their hearts understand. You can help them acquire a taste for beautiful fine art by exposing and familiarizing them with it when they are young and allowing it to speak to their hearts.

I was sitting behind a little two-year-old girl on her daddy's lap at church and was watching her stare intently at a little book of fine art prints her mom had created for her. The pictures depicted Jesus' life and she had glued them on bright colored paper and put them in a little photo album that was just the right size for her little girl's hands. She stared at each picture for the longest time. I knew the pictures were speaking directly to her heart.

And I thought, you can do the same thing with fine art images of mommies and babies and kittens that are "familiar" at this age. I picked up a little photo album for 97 cents at Walmart—it's just the right size for little hands. You can print out some fine art prints of mothers and babies and kittens and

put them in a little picture book like that.

Learning by heart is a lot like eating cake. Estelle Hurll, an art educator from 100 years ago, wrote, "If you are giving a child a piece of cake, it adds nothing to his enjoyment to tell him that it contains certain ingredients and was made by certain rules or that it will contribute to his nourishment. If it is good, he eats it and wants more."

I gave my daughter a little picture book about how all the farm yard animals go to sleep at night. She called me one night and said, "Thanks a lot for the book." Her little 18-month-old had just made her read it to her 17 times in a row. She finally got her to go outside to play with her sisters and my daughter hid the book in the bottom of a big pile of books. As soon as her little girl came back in the house, she dug through the pile of books until she found it again, and made her mom read it again.

We were trying to figure out why the fixation and then it dawned on us. We had just spent a week in Lancaster, Pennsylvania in Amish country. Her little girl had been petting baby lambs and little ponies and watching the sunsets over barns and farms. We think this book recreated all those feelings that were still so fresh and familiar to her and she wanted to keep reliving them.

Again, the attraction of the familiar. Familiarity gives pleasure.

By age three, children are ready for stories. Look for stories with that familiar family element like the story of a mama bear, papa bear and little baby bear; stories of how mommy birds and mommy squirrels take care of their babies; stories of when daddy was a little boy; simple stories of family life. Play time allows them to process what they're learning as they pretend being mommies and daddies and taking care of little babies.

When they pick up a crayon and start to draw circles and squiggly lines, don't be too quick to say, "Look what you can

do! You can draw a letter A!" There is nothing in the letter "a" that is familiar or appealing to a three-year-old. They want to draw sunshines and flower, kittens and mommies—all with smiley faces. Let them improve their manual dexterity by drawing pictures, not letters. Once the heart sees a use for letters, writing will happen easily. No need to rush it.

By age four they're transitioning into the imaginative years and they love to hear stories of familiar things in imaginative ways like *Raggedy Ann*, a doll who comes to life, or Peter Cottontail. And the more they listen to stories they love, stories that make them feel something, their little hearts send a message to their brains: Brain, mom doesn't have enough time to feed us as many stories as we want down here. I need you to learn how to read so I can get at more stories. And the brain gets to work. I have met many people who were raised in story rich environments who had no recollection of being taught how to read. It happened as naturally as acquiring speech. I've seen research that backs it up.

Now we enter the prime years for Imagination, starting at around age five when the heart longs to see familiar things from new angles. The Imagination makes it possible by creating its own images of things the eyes have actually never seen. Don't rush or slight these years. This is the stuff upon which dreams are built, and as Laboulaye cautions: "Mothers who love your children: Do not set them too soon to the study of history; let them dream while they are young."

There are many reasons for cultivating imaginations. For instance, creativity is dependent upon imagination. Nothing in this world has ever been created that didn't first exist as an image in someone's mind. And Felix Adler wrote, "Much of the selfishness of the world is not due to actual hard heartedness but to a lack of imaginative power…the faculty of putting one's self in the place of others." Plus, a vivid imagination is crucial in the study of history, because it is impossible to reproduce history except through the imagination.

Fairy tales and simple stories from mythology are the perfect foods for feeding the imagination. As your children listen to fairy tales, they are not only expanding their capacity to create pictures and images in their minds, their young, impressionable hearts are processing right and wrong, good and evil, justice and injustice in a way that could never be taught directly. They're going to need that as they start applying those lessons to the stories of history. As you tell them fairy tales and folk tales from around the world, you are also providing a layer of familiarity to names and cultures from other lands. A young child loves the music of names like Aphrodite, Prometheus and Eurydice. They're difficult words to read, but when the music of their names is familiar, they'll be like old friends. And there is one more important benefit of introducing these fairy tales and myths. These Imaginative stories can connect your child's heart to the hearts and spirit of the families of historic times because the stories flowed out of their hearts and were passed from generation to generation, from mother to child, down to your child.

A six-year-old who is familiar with beautiful language and can create pictures in his head will love to have you read the wonderful children's classics aloud to him, like *Secret Garden, Treasure Island* and *Heidi*. A child's listening comprehension at this age far exceeds his reading comprehension, so you can offer impressions to his heart that he couldn't yet get on his own. Even if he's a good reader, freeing him up to feel the music in your voice and create all the pictures in his heart without being bogged down in the mechanics of reading will make for long lasting impressions.

By age seven, you can start familiarizing your children with some of the great names of history by telling them stories of their childhoods, which provides the link of familiarity. They also like to hear stories of what it looked like to be a child living in a faraway land. These stories begin to make impressions of different cultures that is preparatory work to the

study of nations that lie ahead. And around this time, the heart says to the brain, Brain, I have stories in here that I want to remember. I need you to get working on and figure out all that writing and spelling stuff so that I can write them down. And the brain says, but I don't know how to do that. And the heart says, "Well, maybe you just better go ask mom." And the brain gets to work.

Around the age of eight, the child is now prepared and ready to enter the Heroic years. He has strong imaging capabilities. He has the beginnings of discernment between right and wrong. He has lots of familiar connection points. He's at home with stories. And he now, quite naturally, wants to hear about real people. At no other time in life will heroes make a deeper impression on the heart than between the ages of 8 to around 11. He wants his first heroes to be action heroes which make introductory stories to the great epic and legendary heroes a perfect choice. They provide a bridge between the Imaginative Years and the Heroic years because they're partly grounded in fiction and partly in fact. These are the stories of King Arthur and Robin Hood, Roland and Siegfried, Beowulf and Hiawatha.

By age nine, children are interested in short, picturesque stories of the great men and women of history. This is the Plutarch approach to history which looks nothing like the school approach of facts and information. When Plutarch wrote his lives of great Greeks and Romans, he admitted that already the facts of their lives had been obscured. That didn't concern him, and he covered himself by using a simple device, "So the story goes…" And he wrote, by "lodging these men one after the other in my house…I may see how to adjust and adorn my own life. Through daily living and associating with them I perceive all their qualities and select all those that are noblest and worthiest." And his "bible for heroes" (Plutarch's *Lives*) is one of the most influential books of all time.

Help your children to now start doing the same thing—to

lodge the great men and women of history one after another in their homes so they can see how to adjust and adorn their own lives. Nothing is more interesting to us than Life. Stories of people are what children's hearts are interested in. And while how we dress and what we eat may have changed throughout history, human nature has not. The ancient Greek has as much to teach your child's heart as the Knight in shining armor. Children care little for the dates and facts of history. Long ago is far more meaningful at this age than 600 B.C. You can pique their interest in historical stories by looking for familiar elements. Does your child own a dog? Here's a good story:

Did you ever hear the story of Newton and his little dog, Diamond? One day, when Newton was fifty years old, and had been hard at work more than twenty years studying the theory of light, he went out of his room, leaving his little dog asleep before the fire. On the table lay a heap of papers, containing all the discoveries which Newton had made during those 20 years. When his master was gone, up rose little Diamond, jumped upon the table, and overthrew the lighted candle. The papers immediately caught fire.

Just as the destruction was completed, Newton opened the door, and saw that the labors of twenty years were reduced to a heap of ashes. There stood little Diamond, the author of all mischief. Almost any other man would have flown into a rage, some even hurting their little dog. But Newton patted him on the head with his usual kindness, although grief was in his heart.

"O Diamond, Diamond," said he, "thou little knowest the mischief thou hast done!"

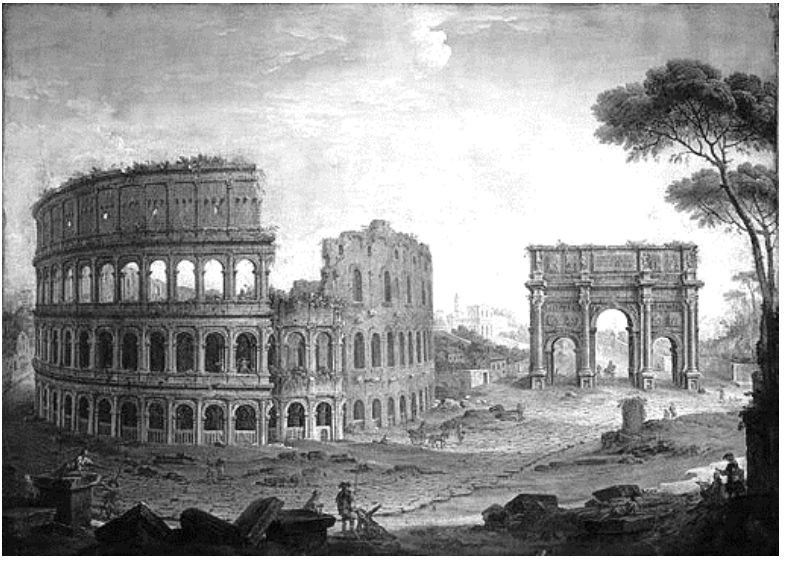
This incident affected his health and spirits for some time afterwards, but from the way he treated his little dog, you may judge what was the sweetness of his personality.

Historical fiction can increase familiarity with these men and women they're getting to know and familiarize the places

and times in which they lived. As your children's reading skills improve, they'll do more independent reading to keep up with the desire to learn more.

By age ten or eleven, their hearts don't need to be fed as much with make believe and they want history delivered more directly. The Landmark Series from the 50s and 60s is an example of a good read for that age and they'll continue to meet new people through biographies and stories.

You can use fine art to bring stories of history to life and deepen impressions, like this:



View of the Colosseum and the Arch of Constantine by Antonio Joli

In the proud days when Rome ruled the world, and the emperor lived in a palace of white marble, or in a house of pure gold, the Colosseum was the greatest theater ever known to be set up on the earth.

There to this day it stands, shattered and broken, but still, perhaps, the most impressive ruin in all the world. In its dark and shameful days, the great white Colosseum, rising story after story from the ground, with great galleries inside to hold

forty thousand people, was a wondrous sight to see. Here came the gladiators, strong men trained to fight each other until one of them was killed. Here the Christians were thrown alive to the lions to make a Roman holiday. No place in the world has seen more cruel sights than this.

But slowly Christianity made its way, until the very emperor became a Christian. Then these shameful things ceased, and the Colosseum became only a circus. The Christians had been growing stronger and stronger for four hundred years, when there came a terrible day for Rome. Alaric, leader of the Goths came thundering outside Rome, but a brave general set the Goths to flight.

Such rejoicing there was in Rome that day that the people flocked to the Colosseum, cheering their brave general. There was a wonderful performance, when suddenly came out of one of the narrow passages leading into the arena, a gladiator, with spears and swords. The rejoicing of the people knew no bounds.

Then happened a strange thing. Into the middle of the arena came an old man, bareheaded and barefooted, calling upon the people to prevent the shedding of blood. The crowd shrieked back at him to stop his preaching and to go away. The gladiators came forward and forced him aside, but still the old man came between them. A storm of stones fell upon him from the angry people. The gladiator struck him down, and the old man perished before the eyes of Rome.

He was a hermit, named Telemachus, one of those holy men who, tired of the wickedness of the world, had gone to live in the hills. Coming to Rome to visit the sacred shrines, he had seen the people flocking to the Colosseum, and pitying them for their cruelty, had gone to stop it or to die.

He died, but his work was done. All that was best in Rome was stirred by the sight of the hermit slain in the midst of the arena, and there was no more slaughter in the great theater. It was the last fight at the Colosseum.

I found a picture of this by googling it and I glued it on a page with Telemachus written on the top along with when he lived in the right hand corner. When I look at these pictures, my heart starts carrying on a conversation within itself like this: Can you imagine a people who are entertained by watching others being tortured and murdered? Well, take a look at the kind of movies people are flocking to these days. But what can I do about it? What can one person do? My heart asks. And then it reminds me of Telemachus…. One man of virtue making a stand. And then my heart stops talking and leaves me to ponder.

By age twelve or thirteen, a student is ready to start putting pieces together. Find introductory stories of France, of Greece, of Germany, one nation at a time, so that his heart can begin to get a sense of the sweep of history and can begin to pick up patterns because the heart is always looking for patterns. He'll also be able to start fitting familiar names into their proper place in history. A student who has no understanding of the history of nations will be clueless as to what's going on in the world. It's like walking into the movie two hours late where you have no idea what's going on because you missed out on everything that happened before. As our world shrinks, our children need to be very aware of the underlying causes of world conflicts.

By age 14, the student's heart may have found topics that it wants to understand at a deeper level and he may choose to study a thread of art or music, architecture, religion or science through those nations.

By age 15, because he's comfortable with words and imagery and has a rich cultural background, he will gain much from the great works of classic literature like *Les Misérables* and *A Tale of Two Cities* that will further deepen his understanding of historical events and from which he will continue to underline and extract gems of wisdom for his literature notebook.

By age 16, his heart hungry for deeper understanding, may tackle books like Durant's Story of Civilization or other works of history. There are so many gaps to fill. He'll continue to read Dickens, Tolstoy, Austen and is well prepared to enter the ongoing conversation of the world's greats. This is not the end of his learning. This is only the beginning.

John Senior who wrote *The Death of Christian Culture*, said, "In order to read the 'great' books of Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine and St. Thomas, we need to replenish the cultural soil that has been depleted and create a place where those works can thrive by cultivating an imaginative ground saturated with fable, fairy tale, stories, rhymes, and adventure—the thousand books of Grimm, Andersen, Stevenson, Dickens, Scott, Dumas and the rest.

"This you will have done.

"The one thing a great books education will not do is create a moral imagination where there is none."

And now maybe your child has gone off to college and he's away from home for the first time.

And he's homesick. His heart reminds him of a story he heard in childhood told by an Ancient Greek—Homer—a story of the longing for home. And now, because he's very comfortable in the music of poetry and imagery, his heart wants to feel the story at a deeper level and pulls it out in its poetic form. And, when he's done, maybe his heart will say, Ah. I really love that. But Brain, we want to feel it on a deeper level. We need you to help us learn some Greek. And the brain, ever the obedient servant, says, I'll get right on it. It's amazing how quickly and efficiently the brain learns hard things when the heart is in the driver's seat and how slow and painful and inefficient the process is when the heart is nowhere to be found.

As I have lodged the great men and women one at a time in my home, this progression of learning—the familiar to the imaginative to the heroic—is the pattern of learning I see in

their lives. I see childhoods rich in story and experience, vivid imaginations and hearts that are always hungry to go deeper as they apply what they are learning to their own lives. As I have gone back, even with my older brain, and replenished the cultural soil of my own heart by reading more fairy tales, reciting more poetry aloud, listening to more classical music, looking at beautiful works of art and picking up works of great literature, especially the children's classics, my life has been enriched tremendously. When I see a sunset, I am sitting on the hillside beside the great French painter, Millet, and I hear his father whisper in my ear, too, "Son, that is God." When I see the daffodils, Wordsworth reminds me I can carry their beauty in my heart always. And my capacity for joy grows larger every day.

As to the formal study of history, I remember reading a well-respected historical scholar's opinion that a student isn't ready for a true study of history until he's 26. I just finished an article where a neuroscientist explained how a brain isn't fully developed until around age 24. Why do teenagers do stupid things? He said it's because the brain is not yet connected to where he can clearly see the consequences of his own actions. Yet, we expect that same teenager to analyze political and economic policies and their effects on historical events? The best he can do is parrot back what he hears. He is not yet ready to make such judgments. There are better ways to use his time.

We often make the study of history so dry and distasteful, that our children put aside their history books long before the age of 26 when they can actually begin a true study of history, which has enough interesting topics to fill a lifetime. As Marguerite Dickson wrote a hundred years ago, "A taste for historical reading is, after all, the valuable gift we can bestow upon our youthful student of history. Having given him that, we may safely leave the rest to him."

I also often hear moms and educators say that they will

only give their students original source documents because they want to be sure they only have the facts. I believe that is a flawed approach. How is it that two highly trained scholars can read the identical source document of Christopher Columbus, and one will conclude Columbus is one of the most despicable men on the planet, and the other will conclude he is one of the bravest and noblest? The answer is, we all filter what we read through our own hearts and only a well-seasoned and mature heart can make proper judgments of history. That only comes with age and experience.

This developmental chart will help you further zero in on choices of what to read with your children. If you have a six-year-old, look for fairy tales. If you have a three-year-old, look for stories from nature or homes. If you haven't followed these levels, you haven't ruined your child! I'm creating new neural pathways every single day. Just look for familiar things to connect to, don't neglect imaginative readings and start feeding a desire to read more about great lives and history by offering short, high interest stories in the beginning that have a connection to something in your child's world.

This is a general guideline. Don't try and make a curriculum out of it. Take in the whole picture of what it is trying to teach you.

Rotation Schedule

month one / sep	month two / oct	month three / nov
1500s Exploration China / Asia / India Scandinavia South Seas Stars M.U.: A Mother's Influence	1600s: Colonies Netherlands Spain Spanish Main / Pirates Ocean M.U.: Nature Study	1700s: Independence England Scotland / Ireland / Wales Rocks M.U.: Music
month four / dec	**month five / jan**	**month six / feb**
George Washington Greece Ancient Rome Italy Plants / Trees M.U.: Art	American Revolution France Canada Switzerland Gardening M.U.: Poetry	A New Nation Holy Land Anc. Civilizations Middle East Insects / Bugs M.U.: Storytelling
month seven / mar	**month eight / apr**	**month nine / may**
1800s: Expansion Native Americans Arabia / Islam / Crusades Birds M.U.: Imagination	Abraham Lincoln African Americans / Slavery Africa Ancient Egypt Animals M.U.: History	Civil War Latin America Human Body M.U.: Language Arts
month ten / jun	**month eleven / jul**	**month twelve / aug**
1900s: America World Wars Germany Russia Eastern Europe M.U.: Math	Ameria Overview World Overview M.U.: Science	America Biographies World Biographies M.U.: Joy

The Rotation Schedule

My husband and I and a couple of our kids went to an Escape Room for the first time awhile ago. If you don't know what that is, there are usually three or four rooms you can choose from. You're given a scenario and then you have one hour to escape. We chose the Fire Escape room and here was our scenario:

The smell of smoke causes you and your family to evacuate your home. While outside, your father tells you his precious family heirlooms are going to be destroyed. Without thinking twice, you tap into your hero instincts and rush back into the house. Can you find all the items and escape before time runs out?

There was a list of about 18 items on the wall for us to look for. Now, we had no idea at all what this was going to look like. I can't give away any details, but I can tell you that the room we were in was very sparsely furnished—a bed, a couple dressers, a few pictures on the wall. At first glance, we thought, what on earth? What are we even looking for? None of those items were in plain sight and it didn't appear there was anywhere to look.

So we just started opening drawers and looking behind things and under things, looking for anything that might give us a clue and we started telling each other random things we were seeing, not knowing if they meant anything or not. Now, we were told that if we got stuck, we could call down to the desk two times and they'd give us a clue. After about twenty minutes of finding nothing, we decided we better ask and he

said, "Did you find such and such item?" and told us where to look for it. Suddenly seeing that made us see how the clues fit together and it got us going. Now we understood what we were looking for and it started getting exciting as we scrambled to look for hidden clues and solved puzzles and there were all kinds of surprises along the way.

We finally got down to the last five minutes with one more heirloom to find. We had all these pieces of puzzles that didn't make any sense and didn't seem to fit together and we thought, "Oh, darn, after all that, we're not going to get out in time." We didn't think there was any square inch that we hadn't searched. Then my husband said, "Uh, guys, did any of you look here?" and he held up an item that suddenly brought all the clues together and we frantically worked a combination and got out of the room with one minute to spare.

It was exhilarating! We were elated! We kept saying, "We did it! We did it!" Afterwards we went to dinner and kept reliving how the clues came together and how we solved the puzzles and all the unexpected surprises. We can hardly wait to do it again!

Now let's revisit the Escape Room curriculum style. First of all, you are not there by choice. Someone has compelled you to be there. You are usually not even given the reason why you're in the room, rather you're handed a stack of tasks to be completed before the hour is over. And if you don't, you can't go out and play.

So the Fire Escape room, curriculum style, might look like this. Open the third drawer down in the dresser. You will find a locked box. Here is the combination of the box. When you open it, there is another assignment inside.

And now imagine reporting to the same room, day after day, with a new stack of tasks to be completed.

True, no child will be left behind. They will probably all eventually get out of the room. But at what cost? I guarantee

there would be no Escape Room franchises. Who would go back? There would be no thrill.

But isn't that what learning by curriculum looks like? Every day we give our children a list of tasks to complete. Define this word. Spell that word. Answer this question. Read this story. And tomorrow, we'll do it again. And the next day and the next day.

How many children do you hear out in the backyard saying, "That was so cool when we copied the definition of refraction." "Yeah! Hey! I can spell it!"

Designers of curriculum have already made all the connections. They have solved all the puzzles. Your job is to simply complete the tasks they have given you. There is little room for the ah-hah moments when pieces come together. There are few Archimedes in the bathtub moments where he shouted "Eureka!" when he figured out a problem he had been working on.

It reminds me of a community I saw in China where everyone was given employment. Everyone had their meals provided for and their housing. They were even given clothes to wear. All their needs were met. They finally had to seal off the balconies because too many were jumping to their death. What was the point of living?

We are designed and hard wired to learn by discovery and exploration. It's finding the clues and the patterns and making the connections for ourselves that keep us coming back for more.

My hope and desire is that you, at some point, will have the courage to relinquish your role as taskmaster and embrace the fun of loading the rooms with clues and getting out of the way while your children explore and discover for themselves. It's up to you to tell the story and light the fire to get the process going. And just like the guy at the desk downstairs, you're there to answer questions when they get stuck. You get to join in the conversation when they start telling you about what

they are learning. In the end, it makes life a whole lot easier for you because you are not burdened with a million facts you feel you need to hammer into your children. When your children learn by exploration and discovery, they'll keep coming back for more. And they'll find hidden treasures of knowledge you may not even know exists.

I think it was William Wordsworth who said one day that there was so much in life that he still wanted to learn, that if he lived 70 times 7 lifetimes, he couldn't get to all of it.

The friends of the great scientist Louis Agassiz wanted to gift him a trip to Europe. He said,

"How can I take time to go there when there is so much in my own backyard I have not yet discovered and learned about?" He stayed home and spent the next nine months exploring every inch of his backyard and thrilled at all he learned.

Is this the love of learning you want to see in the hearts of your children? Then it will require that you let go and trust the process.

Does it help you if I remind you this is God's method of learning He uses with us? He created a beautiful world and loaded it with endless clues. But He has never assigned and compelled His children. His instructions are simply, "Ask. Seek. Knock." It didn't bother Him that it took us nearly 6,000 years to discover electricity and put it to good use. It's been there the whole time. We only figured out flying a little over a hundred years ago.

He knew to not allow the explore and discover process of learning would be to deny us one of our greatest joys. As Dr. Alan Stockdale wrote: "God gave to man the challenge of raw materials, not the ease of finished things. He left pictures unpainted, music unsung, problems unsolved that man might know the joys and glories of creation."

That process of creation is to take matter unorganized and organize it into new ways. In our escape room, we organized

pieces of information into a usefulness, and it was thrilling. Think of all the music that has been created from just eight notes on a scale, all the art that has been painted with three primary colors, and all the works of literature written using twenty-six letters of an alphabet. And think of all that has yet to be created.

What a tragedy that we train our children to wait for instructions; that we rarely give them a chance to explore or discover something that excites them. As I said a moment ago, this "finish the tasks we assign" mentality is turning out generations of students who want nothing to do with learning once they have a diploma in hand. And many other students don't care enough about the diploma to even earn that.

Granted, there is risk involved. We checked and only about 30% make it out of the Fire Escape room on the first try. But even God knows the risk is worth it.

As a wise man said, "A child is ready to learn when a child is ready to learn. Not when we are ready to teach him." Here at the well-educated heart, I will constantly encourage you to let go of the job of taskmaster and embrace the fun of learning the way we were divinely designed to learn. I'm not asking you to do nothing. Your job is going to be to set up the rooms of discovery. The rotation schedule is really nothing more than setting up rooms to explore.

The same goes for the Mother's University. I don't give you an order of what you should read first or even tell you exactly what you should read or give you questions to answer. I don't even tell you what to do or what conclusions you should draw. Rather, I set up rooms that I know are loaded with clues for you to look around and discover and begin to piece things together for yourself, which is the same process I encourage you to allow your children. It's how I've been learning all the things I have been sharing with you about educating hearts of children. And the more I learn, the more I want to learn. My list grows bigger and bigger every day! It's

an exciting and joyful way to live.

There is no one-size-fits-all to learning, although there are too many people out there trying to make it so. Learning the way I am trying to describe to you allows for individual circumstances, personalities, capabilities, aptitudes and interests. It's a very personal journey.

The Rotation schedule is a way to allow this kind of learning to happen.

When you understand the Developmental Levels, the why behind the rotation schedule becomes a little more apparent. I know many people use some sort of rotation schedule. The most popular one is a four-year rotation schedule through history. My problem with that is that it doesn't take into account the differences in a child's ability to grasp things from year to year. If a child goes through Greece, for instance, as a six-year-old, he can only take in what a six-year-old mind can grasp, which isn't a lot yet. By the time he returns at age ten, so much time has passed by that he will have lost much of what he learned. And he'll miss out on what he could have learned as a seven-, eight- and nine-year-old. Maybe that tour at ten will be the last visit to Greece and he will have missed out on what his eleven-, twelve- and thirteen-year-old mind can take in.

By switching to a twelve-month rotation schedule, there are fresh and new topics to visit every month. I've heard children complain when they have to spend long periods of time on one subject. They're inquisitive when they're young! It's not a time to go deep. Learning and understanding needs to layer in, line by line, here a little and there a little. The twelve-month rotation allows for lots of overlapping and repetition. For instance, you may discover some Spanish explorers in month one when you talk about explorers and then you'll see them again in month two in a study of Spain and again in month nine when they're seen from the Latin American's point of view. In month two, you see the Spanish

Armada from Spain's point of view and in month three, you see the Spanish Armada from England's point of view.

But, I hear it said, history needs to be laid out chronologically. Not so. This was clearly taught by the heart educators. Our minds and hearts have to sift through tons of information every single day. It has to be weighed out by importance and placed in a correct file in our brains. We are very equipped to do that. In the early years, we're simply giving them puzzle pieces that will come together over time. These puzzle pieces are going to be in the form of fine art and illustration, poetry, story and even music—all tools that are long lasting. Like Rudyard Kipling taught: "If history were told in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten." The more your children can see and feel history, the more they will want. Facts and information kill a love of history.

Most learning through curriculum is linear. It's presented as though a child just has to be taught a fact, tested to make sure he got it, and then you move on. Most learning that happens in this way goes into the pile of "Who cares?" and is forgotten. But for deep and lasting learning, I see a spiral, returning over and over to a topic, expanding and rising each time it's visited. Have you ever read a book and then read it again a few years later and it's like reading a new book? You see so many things you missed the first time around. It's not that the words on the pages have changed, but you have. You bring more to your reading. That's the same principle at work with the rotation schedule. A child returns to the same general topic every year, maybe even re-reads a book he read earlier, but the next time it is seen with wider vision.

We have a huge subject on our hands! We want to learn about the whole world, not only of all the people who have lived here, but we want to understand the physical world in which we live. In fact, while we have many subjects we study: History, Science, Social Studies, Geography, Literature, Music, Art and so forth, I only see two subjects: a study of

people and a study of nature.

We learn about people through literature, art, music, history and even Geography. Where we live and how we build our homes and adapt our lives is very much tied into Geography. The subject shouldn't be isolated. We learn about nature through science and math. So I have a twelve-month rotation based on history, or more correctly, a study of people and one for nature, which is understanding the world in which we live. Eventually the two spirals start spiraling together into one whole.

Each month you'll lead your child into a "room" which you have prepared with clues and let them look around and start gathering clues from a nation's literature, art, songs, fairy tales, histories, biographies, scientific discoveries, architecture, landmarks and cultural heritage. What they are drawn to will be according to their developmental level. And you can help facilitate that. All the subjects we typically study separately are drawn together under one history umbrella.

A young child may pick out the imaginative tales of the land, the fairy tales and mythology. They may enjoy sharing in that country's holiday celebrations or their music and songs. An older child will begin to want to get to know some of the stories of the people of that land and will take an interest in events. A study of the great classic literature and poetry teach us much about the hearts of the people we are studying. All ages can enjoy looking at the paintings and the architecture of the buildings, and in time, they will begin to see for themselves the lessons gifted from each nation.

In this way, families can all be studying the same general topic, but at different levels. It makes it possible for all family members, regardless of age, to join in the conversation. As you rotate back each year, older siblings will share favorite stories with younger ones. Maybe they'll even volunteer to read favorite books aloud to them, and they'll gain new insights their second time through.

I hope this begins to paint a vision of possibilities to you. The website has an option where all the resources can be accessed through the rotation schedule to make it very convenient to use.

So let me briefly describe the reasoning behind the choices. The people side of the rotation is organized around America as the spine. You may be from another country and be inclined to use your home country as the spine. Of course you love your own country and you want your children to love it. But let me explain why I think you may want to consider allowing America to be the spine.

As you look at how long it has taken for freedom to find a home, America, conceived in liberty, is the culmination of centuries of strivings of people everywhere. The story of freedom is one of the most important stories that can be told, because only in freedom can we attain our highest potential. America's story is the story of freedom. Already we see people trying to replace it with systems that have failed repeatedly throughout history. A study of nations will help your children see that. From America's earliest beginnings, the main facts were well established for us to study. There is no "dim twilight of myth and legend" such as you find in the majority of other nations. We can see its growth unfold line upon line from simple huts to vast networks of cities through a historical record that is complete, authentic and reliable.

And probably the most important reason to make America the spine of study is the fact that America's story is the combination of the stories of all nations. We are the children of England, of Scotland, China, France, Spain, India, Africa, each one weaving its heritage into the fabric we call America.

Because of our roots, the study of America easily lends itself to the study of all nations. So here is how they are connected. America's history is divided into 10 chronological monthly studies, with months 11 and 12 left open for review and for revisiting favorite topics. Each of these monthly topics

then tie into a nation or a geographic area. For instance, in month 1 when you study the early explorers like Columbus, it leads you into a study of China and India because that is where he was trying to go. The Vikings came from Scandinavia, so we want to know their story.

In month 2, when you study the Pilgrims, you can visit Holland because that's where they sought refuge before coming to America. And in learning Holland's story, you'll see its similarity to America's story. Just as we freed ourselves from England and set up a Republic, 200 years earlier, Holland fought to free itself from Spain's rule and set up a Republic. So you'll want to know Spain's story, too.

In month 3, we are the colonies of the British, so we turn to a study of our Mother Country and take a look at all the British Isles.

Month 4 takes a look at George Washington, who is likened to the great Roman leader Cincinnatus which leads us to a study of Rome which cannot be separated from a study of Greece.

In month 5, with the study of Lafayette, the young Frenchman who came to fight for liberty in our Revolution, it leads us back to France.

Month 6, the new nation of America is born, conceived in liberty and built upon the rock of the teachings of the Bible, which leads us to a study of the Holy Land and the early Hebrews and their neighbors.

Month 7 is for a study of the expanding American frontier, and is tied into the study of the expansion of another world frontier under the teachings of Islam.

The study of Lincoln and slavery in month 8 leads us back to Africa.

Grant and Lee and the Civil War are the focus of month 9. Both Grant and Lee fought in the fight against Mexico and so leads us into a study of Mexico and our neighbors down south in South America.

Month 10 brings a study of World War I and leads us to take a look at Russia and Germany and other Eastern European countries.

The nature rotation takes you through the Stars, the Ocean and Rocks—those subjects that pertain to the physical sciences of creation—followed by Insects, Plants, Birds and Animals—all the Life sciences. The same plan of study is in place for them. There are four months left open in the summer for extra exploration of nature and applying the stories they've learned throughout the year.

Notebooking provides a way to start to sort and organize the clues they will find. And if they get to the end of the month and haven't covered all the books you had planned, no worries. You'll be back around the next year and the year after that.

This rotation schedule is meant to be a servant, not a master. It brings a little order and rhythm to your learning so that you aren't trying to pull something out of the whole world every single day. If you get to the end of the month and you are in the middle or a great book or exploring a line of study, you don't have to abandon it just because a new month has started. There is plenty of room for flexibility and adjustment. You can even study in a different order. The only thing in an order is the American history spine, and really, the first half is colonial and the second half is post-Revolution. So you can rearrange it easily.

It will take time to learn and apply the lessons you will glean from a study like this. A lifetime, really. When you see your child walk across the stage in cap and gown, it's not called a Conclusion Ceremony. It's called a Commencement. This is the Commencement of life but I also think of it as a Commencement to a lifetime of learning of which you have but laid a foundation. Remember the thrill when seemingly unrelated things suddenly start clicking and connecting and taking life? It will happen if you don't interfere with the pro-

cess and if you are a fellow traveler on the journey, delighting in your own discoveries and sharing them, all with a purpose of helping your children discover the rules for happy living, individually and as societies. As we tend to the inner kingdom of our children's hearts, it will be from the treasures there that they will begin to build a new world.

Forgotten Classics Family Library

As you come to understand the importance of fine art, music, stories and poetry, you may be wondering where you can find inspired works that will preserve a culture of faith, family and freedom and a love of the good, the true and the beautiful. There has been a major culture shift in our world and we have to look to the past for help.

That is why I would now like to help you catch the vision of what the Forgotten Classics Family Library is and more importantly, what it can do for you and your family. The books in this library are key to heart education and all align with the rotation schedule that has been described to you. They are available as free digital reads or you can purchase hard copies in our store. Then, I will walk you through all the different series that are available.

I was astonished to learn that a gold mining company will mine anywhere from two to ninety tons of ore just to process one ounce of gold. And yet, that gold is so precious, it is worth it. Have you ever thought about what makes gold so valuable? Well, for one thing, it is so shiny and pretty. And that shine and luster doesn't fade over time. Gold doesn't corrode. It lasts. And we can use it to buy things we think will make us happy.

History shows the great lengths people will go to get gold, gold and more gold. Just like our friend King Midas.

When I discovered a treasury of old books, I learned that they were written in an era known as the Golden Age of Children's Literature, the perfect descriptive name for stories that have not lost their luster or their value even after hundreds

of years. The writers of that Golden Age of Children's Literature had to sift through tons of sand and rock and debris to mine for the gold in literature, art, music, poetry, history, biography and nature, which they then preserved for a new generation of young people. Their gift is they wrapped the gold in stories to help us see and feel.

And now what I've tried to do is to take some of that gold and put it in a small family library that will fit in your home and I've called it the Forgotten Classics Family Library. Everything in this library is taken from the writings of that Golden Era. The word classic, by Webster's definition, means pure, correct and refined. The classic stories are like gold for our souls. Fairy tales, myths and epic and legendary tales have endured because they are wrapped around nuggets of truth. They shine. And generation after generation has been attracted to and found great value in them. Yet, after travelling so far, today they are being neglected and forgotten.

We are inundated with information and hundreds of new books are being published every day. If we're not careful, we may wear out our lives shoveling the 90 tons of worthless rock and debris and die as spiritual paupers.

The Forgotten Classics Family Library offers you the gold.

Before I walk you through the different series, I want to help you understand there is a design in how they unfold. Let me try and illustrate why that matters in this way.

I had my grand piano serviced not long ago. As the technician took the piano apart, I marveled at the complexity of the pieces. And I reflected, someone didn't sit down one day and say, "I think I'll build a piano." Behind my piano were hundreds if not thousands of stories of people spanning as many years who sacrificed and labored to bring forth knowledge that the next person could build upon. Long ago, someone had to first identify musical tones and then someone else developed a scale based on those tones and someone else provided a way of notation. Most of their names have been

lost along the way. Then came many experiments in creating instruments to produce sound and far, far down the path, it took patient, musical geniuses to discover the secrets behind the effect music has on us.

When I sit down at the piano and open up a piece of music and play, I am the blessed one who gets to enjoy the fruit of all their labors. You might say I live in the great day of the harvest.

When God created our world, He had an end in mind. He knew what fruit He hoped to have from His labors. When you look at ancient literature, you can see that, from the very earliest days, He planted an idea in the hearts of His children of a Kingdom of Great Happiness. And if you have eyes to see and a heart to understand, you'll find He has hidden clues everywhere on how to build that Kingdom and you will recognize a work that has been going on since the beginning of recorded history. It has been a process wherein each succeeding generation has built upon the labors of the previous one. The Laws of the Harvest are in play. Nothing can be reaped today that was not sown in the past. And you cannot speed grow a garden.

In the childhood of mankind, you find simple stories that seemed to spontaneously spring out of the hearts of the ancient people. These fairy tales and myths and legendary heroes contained seeds of truth like there is good and evil, right and wrong, that there are Higher Beings who care about us and that no matter how hard life is or how unfair, there is hope of a happily ever after. There were life messages built in them to teach us how to be happy. I have found the same nuggets of truths in all lands and among all cultures.

These stories were not written down in the beginning. They were shared orally, by heart, through song and rhyme and imagery and passed down from generation to generation, each one refining and polishing along the way.

Then great writers drew upon this storehouse of perennial

truths and wove them into their literature, musicians wove them into their compositions, artists into their paintings, poets into their verses which now inspired generations of men and women to live lives that were nobler, and purer. The treasures of truth served as an uplift to humanity. And then the stories of their lives were recorded in the pages of history for generations that followed to be inspired by them and to become even wiser than they were.

As Sir Isaac Newton said, "If we have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."

We have been provided shoulders of giants to stand upon.

How tragic, then, that there are those in this generation meant to be the generation of the great harvest who think we can throw all of that away and that we're smart enough to not need them. They don't understand the law of the harvest. They are dismissing a study of history and the study of lives as irrelevant, yet it is only by studying our past that we can make sense of our present and correct the path going forward. They are clearing library shelves of classic literature, of Homer, of Shakespeare. They are dismissing the fairy tales and myths as non-essentials. They are removing a study of the Arts from the schools. The steady, repetitive beat of modern music is desensitizing our ability to feel the messages preserved and passed along by the music masters. In other words, we are tossing the gold and keeping the tons of debris.

Vain and foolish are the words that come to mind.

How can we stop this?

I see homes as the hope for preserving the gold, much like the monasteries of Ireland in the Dark Ages of Europe. Those monks gathered the fragments of civilization and spent their days preserving it while the rest of Europe crumbled. And then one day, they set out to the waste lands with their illuminated manuscripts attached to their belts, and lit the fires of civilization again. Everything we need to preserve the riches of the past has been delivered to our homes—for free, by the

way.

The Forgotten Classics Family Library is my contribution towards this preservation. It isn't a set of random books we decided to reprint, but rather there is a deliberate purpose in its design. It starts with oral tales, rhymes and imagery—just like in the childhood of Mankind—then moves into imaginative tales, then tales of legendary heroes and then real life heroes. I have heard this pattern called building blocks for the soul. The heart educators taught it and I passed it along, moving from the Familiar to the Imaginative to the Heroic. Starting in the early 1900s, many book series were created around this same pattern for parents to use in the home: *My Book House, The Children's Hour, Junior Classics, The Bookshelf for Boys and Girls* to name a few.

One of the first series I created was the Story Hour series. I wanted to give you a sampling of the kind of stories you would be searching for if you wanted to unfold this developmental pattern with your own children. I didn't expect to grow the Forgotten Classics to be as big as it is, but over the years, I have seen how hard it is getting to come by stories like these, and I wanted to provide as much as I could, always searching for the best of the best of what was available to me.

So let me use the Story Hour Series to better unfold this pattern for you. I mostly had children under the age of 8 in mind, but it's a great starting place for anyone. Once you understand what you are looking for, you can certainly build your own library with books of your choosing. I'm simply offering a library of convenience.

The first lessons are best delivered through the music of your voice, just as in the early days of mankind. That's an important part of the pattern—oral before written. So the first stories are meant to be delivered as read alouds.

The Story Hour starts with two volumes for the youngest child whose preferred languages are pictures and rhymes. Here are simple stories of paintings little children can relate to—

familiar things like animals and children and families. It helps you, as a parent, see the kinds of stories you can tell to go with paintings like these and to give you ideas of the first kinds of art you will want to share with your children. It also includes a book for you, as parents, to deepen your own appreciation for fine art.

Stories and Rhymes includes Mother Goose rhymes, vital for preparing your children to fall in love with poetry. Mother Goose has tremendous ordering properties for the young child's brain. Also, you'll find simple beginning stories that have been familiar favorites for generations, perfect for telling by heart. There aren't pictures for these stories. They are meant to be carried by the music of your voice and for a child to paint his own pictures in his imagination.

Then we move into the Imaginative stories, fairy tales and myths where children begin to get a sense of right and wrong, good and evil while building their powers of imagination, so vital for everything else that follows. History is very difficult to comprehend without an imagination; especially a moral imagination.

Let me remind you of what John Senior wrote:

"In order to read the 'great' books of Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine and St. Thomas, we need to replenish the cultural soul that has been depleted and create a place where these works can thrive by cultivating an imaginative ground saturated with fable, fairy tale, stories, rhymes and adventure—the thousand books of Grimm, Andersen, Stevenson, Dickens, Scott, Dumas and the rest. The one thing a great books education will not do is create a moral imagination where there is none."[16]

Remember, also, Faith requires an imagination.

We can learn more about a people through their mythical and imaginative tales than by their scattered and limited

[16] John Senior, *The Death of Christian Culture* (1978).

facts. Their stories reveal their hearts and they, in turn, will cultivate our hearts. Within the wonder tales and myths of the nations are fragments of Truth and life lessons the discerning eye and understanding heart will begin to recognize.

By the age of eight or nine, children are ready to begin to be introduced to the epic and legendary heroes, and more importantly, the introduction to the Hero's Journey, the journey we must all take in life, where we set out on an adventure to an unknown place. Along the way, we encounter temptations and trials, which are often overcome with supernatural help. Through the process, we are transformed and return home, of greater use in the service of others.

The next building block is to begin to add in true stories of how other people have lived—their hero's journey, the application of lessons of right and wrong and good and evil—which includes stories from history and biographies. For this particular series, I include simple, short stories to begin to familiarize children with names and events. The draw to the familiar cannot be overemphasized, which is why, for young children, I looked especially for stories of the childhoods of great lives that gives children something they can relate to and then build upon.

Also, we want to begin to familiarize them with the great classic works of literature, so here are simple retellings of the stories of Shakespeare, of Chaucer, of Dante, of the Bible to prepare them for later study.

So far I've been talking about the world of people, but the world of nature is also filled with clues for our happiness. Many of the original myths were inspired by nature. These nature stories don't just teach facts and information. They help open a sense of wonderment and curiosity and teach children to use their senses and the powers of their own observations to learn the lessons the world of nature has to teach them.

I'm often asked where books on character building can be

found. And my response is every book in this library. The writings of this Golden Age were all about character building. To show you what I'm talking about, I included a volume of stories arranged by character trait so you can see how various stories teach them. Character building is a prime objective of this kind of education.

Finally, you'll find a volume of Christmas stories. But it just isn't a volume of Christmas stories—it is a volume of stories about the power of Love. Love is the glue that holds our world together. Without Love, everything falls apart. It is hoped that students who pass through all these volumes will feel a greater measure of love for all God's children everywhere and a love for the beautiful world we live in. And through that love, find a way to use their knowledge and skills to bless the lives of others—that's Righteousness—right-useness. Just like these Christmas stories demonstrate.

These are living books, rich in nutrients to feed young souls. They've traveled a long ways to reach your home. Add a little conversation—things like "I notice" or "I wonder" or "That reminds me of"—and a little notebooking and you will have a course of study that will prepare your children to make a life, not just a living. You will have given them the gold. And there will be lots of time left over to pursue individual interests and passions and to develop talents and, of course, academic skills. These stories are like the jewels of a day. They don't take up a lot of room. But they definitely add the sparkle and value to everything else you'll do. What could be easier on you? In fact, the more you try to plan and create curriculum out of these stories and figure out study guides and questions, the more you will interfere and shut down the natural processes already in place. Your children's hearts will know what to do with these stories. This library is designed for exploration and discovery, not systematic learning.

Most of the books in the various series are organized around the twelve-month rotation schedule which will give

you a tour of the whole world. When you get to the end of each twelve-month cycle, just start over again. Read what you can or what you want your first time through the rotation—even if that is only one story a month!—and know you'll be back around the next year, and the next year and the year after that. It's like gathering puzzle pieces along the way that, in time, will begin to fit together and reveal a wonderful vision of our world to your children and more importantly, their place in it.

A reading record has been provided to keep track of where you have been.

And if your children resist these stories at first, feed your own heart until it's so full, it just naturally starts spilling out. It may take time and patience to wean your children from the fast food diet the world has been feeding them. Don't force feed them. Be patient. There is no timetable. You can't fall behind in this kind of learning.

With this introduction, I will now walk you through the entire Forgotten Classics Family Library.

In development at this writing is a single volume called the *New Mother's Companion: Lullabies, rhymes and stories to share "by heart."* A new mother is busy, so each month I give her just one new lullaby or nursery song to learn, a few Mother Goose rhymes to learn by heart, and a simple classic story to practice telling to give mothers what they need for the first two years of their baby's life.

The Book of Delights has become a favorite of all ages. It is filled with fine art that even your youngest children will delight in as well as sweet poems and rhymes and some simple stories for your beginning readers.

We offer some bonus books as you build your library, including the *Story Bible*, which helps you familiarize young ears to beautiful scriptural and poetic language. You can't start too young. Scriptures are the lamp that lights the path. It is also available in special editions where there are spaces to glue the

fine art images we have provided to go with many of the stories.

Also *Poetry for the Well-Educated Heart* has selections broken down by the developmental levels I have been describing as well as the rotation schedule.

Restoring the Art of Storytelling will help you along your journey to become a storyteller yourself—the absolute best way to pass values on from generation to generation.

Now, to help build strong imaginations, we have provided 12 volumes of fairy tales and myths from around the world to coincide with the rotation. Fairy tales appeal to all ages so they make a perfect family read-aloud.

The Nature Series, as I mentioned before, will not only teach facts of nature but will help children begin to recognize the lessons and principles that nature teaches us. These writings help to develop observational skills, critical for the study of Science that will come later, but more importantly, will give your children a source of great joy in their lives. The first eight volumes follow the rotation schedule, the final four take nature in as a whole, and progress from stories for your littlest listeners to stories for your older children.

The Sunshine Series is a collection of less common Children's Classics that demonstrate a Well-Educated Heart approach to life and learning. They inspire and warm the heart. Not all the books in this series coincide with the rotation directly. Rather the first books generally, starting with The Golden Name Day, are for younger listeners, the later for more mature readers. So spread them out over the years. Of course, you'll also want to draw from favorites like *The Secret Garden*, *Anne of Green Gables,* and *Treasure Island*, but copies of books like those are still easy to come by so we aren't planning to reprint them. Do add those books to your library, as well.

My Fine Art Story Book takes the study of art to the next level. A study of art gives children an eye for beauty. I have

been acquiring some rare art books with wonderful stories in them that I share through this series, along with fine art images similar to the layout of My Book of Delights.

The Cousins Series has 24 volumes in it. When the series was written a hundred years ago, our world was shrinking and the authors wanted to teach children to appreciate cultural differences. The intent was love for all God's children. Some of the perspectives are not politically correct today, a few even blatantly racist, but rather than abridge them, I mostly kept the original writings and leave it to you to use these as teaching moments with your children. The good far outweighs the negative. I also included Lucy Fitch Perkins' Twin Series and the Cousins of Long Ago Series. This is a gentle introduction to the world's history and its people. Young children love to hear about other children. It's also a fun way to introduce geography as they find the various nations on their world globes. The study of these books can be spread out over several years.

In nearly every major civilization, an epic hero emerged with his hero's journey—heroes like Siegfried, Roland, Rustum, Odysseus, King Arthur, names that many of our children have never heard of today. The books in our Epic and Legendary Heroes series are retellings for young people. Start with favorites like King Arthur and Odysseus, and over the years, unfold the stories until your child is familiar with all of them. The world has created no better teachers of bravery, selflessness, loyalty, and perseverance.

The Classic Literature for Young People Series includes introductory stories to the great works of Shakespeare, Chaucer, Spencer, Cervantes, Bunyan, the Bible, and more. As your children become familiar with these works, they will be like old friends when they visit them in later years in their original forms and will be of great profit to them. These are reprints of a series called Told To The Children written by some of the all-star writers of the day—writers such as Henrietta Marshall, Andrew Lang, Amy Steedman, Mary

MacGregor who you have been introduced to in other series. These are small pocket-sized books with about 100 pages that are perfect for young readers to read to themselves.

My America Story Book and the Freedom Series work hand in hand. Read them concurrently or separately. My America Story Book is a collection of stories taken from dozens of books and allows you to sample the perspectives of many writers and offers a wonderful overview of our nation's history. It has awakened an interest in history in many young people, which is the purpose of this series—to awaken interest. I view it as a gateway to study. There are audios that can be listened to as well as pictures that can provide a beginning notebooking experience. You will even find music to go along with the stories.

The Freedom Series layers in a deeper level of understanding of some of the people and events they will be introduced to in the brief stories of My America Story Book. These stories were written by men and women who understood the great price paid for our freedom and were anxious to teach the next generations how to hold on to it. So lessons in liberty are woven into their writings. The final books of both series provide a review of the full sweep of the history they have been learning all year. There will be several opportunities in the library for a sweep of both American and World History, if you're worried about the pieces coming together.

The Great Lives Series will now introduce them to more lives of many of the great men and women of history. They help our young people to see all the many possibilities of life open to them and show them they can overcome hard things and be part of the uplift of humanity. While modern biographies tend to expose all the warts and flaws, these books are designed to teach and inspire. Young people need heroes in their lives. The flaws can come later when they are mature enough to keep them in perspective. The books are offered two ways: by topic—Great Scientists, Great Musicians, and

so forth, or sorted by the rotation. There are stories for young and older readers. The rotation edition includes a few stories that are not found in the topics series. I also added introductory stories to all the major religions of the world in this series.

My World Story Book is similar to My America Story Book with audios and pictures for notebooking. It is meant to awaken an interest in the world's history by introducing inspiring stories of key figures as well as names you have likely never heard of. The first ten volumes mostly include stories from Arthur Mee's *1000 Heroes*. The last two volumes will revisit some of these men and women and offers a look at their lives when they were children as told in Amy Steedman's *When They Were Children*.

Now there are several World History series that work together to layer in understanding. After all, the world is a really big place! It would be impossible to take it all in, in one sweep. And even with these books, we can only hope to give our children a taste for learning history, which they will hopefully spend the rest of their lives adding to. Keep in mind—the way people dressed and how they got around and the kinds of houses they lived in may have changed, but human nature has not. It's the lessons in human nature that are the vital part of our history study at this stage of learning. It isn't so much that we need to know about them, but rather what they will teach us about ourselves that is important.

The World History Series was the original series I created. As I searched for books to include, I tried to find those that gave the simplest introductory look at each nation's story that I could find.

The World Freedom Series then takes many of those stories to a deeper level and adds in additional stories and figures. I gathered books from some of the all-time best children's history writers—Henrietta Marshall, Mary MacGregor, Haaren and Poland, Helene Guerber and others who were so

gifted in bringing the events and people to life. As you read them, you will feel the great struggle for freedom that has been going on for a very long time. That is why I called it the World Freedom Series.

The World's Story in Story, Song and Art was the monumental work of Eva March Tappan who will now continue to flesh out the stories your children are becoming familiar with through the eyes of the Artist, Musician and Storyteller. This is such a priceless collection with so many interesting things to discover and learn. It can serve as a supplemental study to whatever you may be using to study history. We included all of her selections, but re-organized it by the rotation schedule. It took 24 volumes.

The Sarah K. Bolton Famous Lives series adds another treasure chest of great souls for your older kids to spend time with. She, like other writers of her day, wrote to inspire hearts. Each story was carefully researched. It wasn't unusual for her to read more than fifteen books about the individual before she'd write the chapter about them. She knew many of these men and women personally. They have so much to teach us about how to live more noble and refined lives. I can think of no more important study as our children get ready to leave home than the study of Great Lives.

Finally, we offer the Appreciation series. By now, your students have been exposed to many people and many writings. This particular series will deepen their appreciation of Music, Literature, Poetry and Art as they continue to learn from the treasures the world has left us to study, preparing them for a lifetime of learning. It will suggest to them many works that they will hopefully want to now seek out on their own.

In that same vein of lifelong learning, we have reprinted the Delphian Course. This was a college-level Humanities Course specifically designed for women and mothers a hundred years ago to study in their homes. They recognized that the more educated the mothers were, the greater their

influence. Of course, it's not just for grown women. A mature, motivated high schooler could certainly benefit from it.

We also offer a Mother's Learning Library as part of our Mother's University. This series is where I gathered some of my favorite writings of the heart educators so you can study many of the same writings I have been learning from to expand your own understanding.

I will never say never, but I feel like these series will complete the Forgotten Classics Family Library. Anyone who reads through these volumes will gain an understanding of our world that I would say far exceeds most of our college graduates.

As Susan Schaeffer Macaulay wrote:

"Education extends to all life. In fact, an educational system that says, one bright summer's day in the dawn of my youth, 'There. Now you are educated. This piece of paper says so,' is doing me a gross disfavor. The truly educated person has only had many doors of interest opened. He knows that life will not be long enough to follow everything through fully."

I hope the Forgotten Classics Family Library will open many doors of interest.

Which books should you start with? Ideally every child will eventually work through all of them. Each layer serves a purpose. The only difference is how fast. A high schooler may read through several series in a single year. The layering approach is meant to capture and grow interest through familiarity. If you have a High Schooler and you try to jump right into the World Story volumes, for instance, it may be like throwing a log on a fire that has not yet been kindled. I suggest that you not discount fairy tales for them or introductory history stories, such as My America Story Book of My World Story Book.

As to arranging your books, I used to shelve my Forgotten Classics according to series. But I just reorganized my own

library this way—I have all the month 1 books together, month 2 and so forth. That way, as each month rolls around, I can easily look to see what my choices are. I wouldn't limit a child. Let him read whatever he is willing to or whatever you are willing and have time to read to them. What doesn't get read one year is there to pick up another time through the rotation. And the nature of these books is that they can be read more than once with new understanding each time. Use our handy Reading Record to keep track of where you have been.

As something strikes an interest, look to the larger Libraries of Hope library for additional book suggestions or do your own search and look for recent books that offer fresh perspectives. This is not meant to be a list of the only books I would have a child read. It's a starting point and a gateway. Biblioguides is an incredible way to find just what you are looking for.

I can tell you—as I have immersed myself in these stories, my life has changed. My heart is so much richer. I see a God who loves every one of His children, no matter where or when they lived, and who has been speaking to them from the very beginning of our world. He has spoken through prophets and scriptures, but He has also spoken through poets and sages, architects and painters and sculptors, singers and storytellers. He reveals Himself in all of His creations. And once our hearts are opened to recognize his Hand and voice, we will find ourselves surrounded by His love and influence, even in the midst of the messiness of our world. There is a divine melody that runs through the dissonance.

Think about it—what generation in all the history of the world has had access to the lessons of history to learn from that this generation has access to? Who has had more lives to study? Who else could have learned from the literature, the art, the music, the poetry of the entire world? We are the generation of the great harvest. Will we let it go to waste?

There is reason to believe this is the age of gathering the fragments of truth spread over the earth into one great whole that will unite us as one family under the Fatherhood of God. It is the best of times to be alive. But scriptures warn it will also be the worst of times.

So one final thought.

Libraries of Hope was built on a desire to create a small library of books that would offer hope. Hope for something better is what keeps us moving forward through hard times. Nature teaches us there must be a winter if we would enjoy a spring. In our day of the great harvest, we can see signs of an approaching winter. More than ever, we need to fill the hearts of our children with hope, and that is exactly what these books have done for me in the many years I have been gathering them. I have found that no matter what I am facing in my personal life or what the world is facing, I can find a story that shows me the way through.

I hope the library can do the same for you.

And above all, I have a hope for that Kingdom of Great Happiness that has been the plan the whole time.

Would you like to build a Well-Educated Heart?

Start with this spine of golden stories. Supplement with books of your choosing. Layer deep. Expand wide. The journey of learning never ends!

(**NOTE** All the books in the Forgotten Classics Family Library are available as free digital reads at librariesofhope.com or hard copies may be purchased in our store. In addition, you will find suggestions for crafts, foods, plays, fine art, movies, music, related podcasts, audio books and stories and more. It is worth your time to go through the Libraries of Hope tour in Section Five of Catch the Vision at librariesofhope.com. A complete list of all the books that were used is found in the Footer of the site. The library contains 301 complete books and selections from 434 others.)

The Unplanner

If you previously went through Catch the Vision, you'll notice that I am replacing a very long presentation on planning and planners with a very brief one.

That is because experience is teaching me that the less you plan, the better off you are in this kind of learning environment.

That may panic some of you. But I will simply refer you back to the Rhythm of Life presentation. Yes to creating a rhythm in your day that works for you! But never allow the rhythm to drown out the song of the heart. You have to give room for that song to flow and thankfully, everyone's song is different.

I mentioned that I, for years, tried to plan menus. Sometimes I tried to plan meals out for a month at a time so I didn't have to think about it. It seems so logical, doesn't it? Yet, more often than not, the meal assigned to the certain day either didn't sound appealing, or something came up and it was too time intensive for that day, or maybe we decided to just go out to eat.

You may have experienced the same thing in planning out your learning activities. All those booklists and plans looked great on paper. But then your kids and day-to-day life entered the equation, and all those carefully made plans flew out the window.

So what has worked best for me in meal planning is that I have a recipe book of my favorite recipes and that's my go-to to jot down a variety of meals for the week, buy the food so I know I have it on hand, and then I choose the meal for the

day according to what I feel like eating or cooking on that day. There's flexibility that allows me to throw in some new recipes I find along the way.

The original planner was designed with this method in mind. There was a page to make sure you had gathered everything you needed. But now the new website does that for you. It reminds you to let the Forgotten Classics be the spine of your day, like I talked about previously, and here you can just open and read. To expand from there, you've got Biblioguides, music, art to look at, plays to try out, movies to watch, crafts to do, food to cook, you can easily find something every single day spontaneously, with a general plan in mind. The rotation provides the rhythm and the framework. I walk you through that in the Libraries of Hope tour video. It is worth your time to watch it.

In other words, I've already provided a basic menu for you to now customize. The good news is almost everything is right there for you. You don't even have to go shopping.

So I've changed my tune, inspired by my oldest daughter who presented me with an idea that has worked best for her family of six daughters, ages 3 to 17. Originally she gave me her wish list for a planner that we released a few years ago. But with as busy as life is, she realized it was more beneficial for her to look at what she had done at the end of the day rather than plan for what she was going to do. She has learned to be much more spontaneous in her learning.

So here is her modification. I've attached a PDF you can easily print out. She printed out enough pages for a whole year, with days of the week on the left side and a blank page on the right. She added a favorite fine art print to the cover and had it spiral bound. Now she can easily jot down doctor appointments or other events going on that week so that she is aware of them. Then she writes down what they did as a record of their learning. But the funnest thing is on the right side of the page, at the end of the week, she glues in pictures

of their week.

Can you imagine the memories this "un-planner" will spark in the coming years?

Her five daughters ages 7 to 17 have their own un-planner and they picked their own art for the cover. This is where they can make an accounting of their day and jot down the highlights and add the pictures. The pictures go in at the end of the week. If you make it part of the rhythm of your day, it can be a very easy way to reflect on what they did and think about what they hope to accomplish the next day. Also, it gives them a place to hold on to favorite things they find along the way—favorite art, favorite music or movies or books. Her youngest tells her mom what she wants to remember and her mom jots it down.

If you go week after week and you haven't done anything that's worth taking a picture of, you may want to rethink what you are prioritizing. Are you stuck in a rut of rhythm? Or are you actually living life? How sad if there are no stories to tell of childhood for those are the stuff memories are made of and part of the glue that binds us together.

The Reading Record keeps track of forgotten classics and other books they read. They have math programs they work through. They practice handwriting as part of the rhythm of the day. Their notebooks give evidence of history and language arts. Nature journaling and photos of their many hikes in nature give evidence of Science studies. As she lives in a state with pretty strict requirements, this un-planner still gives her the information she needs to report what they did to comply.

There's a spot for her to mark if they did music, art, poetry, stories or nature. She doesn't do all of them every day, but it's a quick way to see if something got neglected during the week.

The more you think simple, the more success you will have. This may help you simplify. And you may be surprised

by how much you really are accomplishing in a day!

There's a free pdf provided for you in Section 5 of Catch the Vision at librariesofhope.com that you can print out and create your own un-planner with, if you'd like to give it a try.



Notebooking

When I was a newlywed, my husband and I were both students at Brigham Young University. It was my good fortune to be asked to serve on a committee that organized a special meeting for the women with Freda Joan Lee as our special speaker. Her husband was Harold B. Lee who had passed away a few months earlier. Now, I know not all of you are of my faith—so I'll just explain that Harold B. Lee was the president of our church. He was revered as a prophet just as there were prophets in Old Testament days. To be able to meet his wife was a great honor.

It fell on my husband and I to drive to Salt Lake from Provo and pick her up at her home and drive her down to the event, and then take her back home again. So I got to go into her home and spend the day with this wonderful woman in a very close and private way. She shared so many personal experiences and had such profound words of wisdom. I kept meaning to write them down, but I thought, how could I ever forget these things?

But time passed. And I did forget them. All of them. I remember my husband got to wind President Lee's grandfather clock and I remember Sister Lee fell asleep on my shoulder in the car. I remember how I felt when I was near her and how I felt when I was in her home. But the rest is all gone.

Not writing down the things I learned from her is one of the big regrets of my life. And no matter how hard I try to retrieve them from my memory, I simply can't.

I remember a marketing class where we were taught that research shows it takes, on average, seven times for an ad to

sink into a consumer. So repetition in marketing is a key component. You can't show an ad once and expect a consumer to run out and buy your product.

The same principle of repetition applies to learning. Our minds are bombarded with tons of information every single day that has to be sifted according to importance. Much of it goes in the garbage pile or we would be hopelessly overloaded. Notebooking is a way to hold on to that which matters the most to us. Emerson went out early to hunt a thought as a boy might hunt a butterfly, and successful, pinned the prize in his cabinet by entering it into his "Thought Book."

So since it will take seven times for you to hear me, I will say this several times: That which is not written down is easily forgotten. Through books, your children are going to spend time with some of the greatest, noblest, wisest men and women who have ever walked the earth who are going to teach them priceless lessons about life and living. Notebooking is a way for them to capture and remember those lessons and experiences so that they're not forgotten.

Knowledge of whole civilizations has vanished where they left no written records. And much of our learning washes away when we don't take the time to write. Third time: That which is not written down is easily forgotten. In fact, the more we write, the more we learn. Very few of us retain much at all of what we read or study. As I've been going through notes of past podcasts and presentations I've done to put new training classes together, I am astonished at all I have forgotten that I said! One of my biggest frustrations is when I remember reading a story or an idea and I can't for the life of me remember where I read it. There are a couple of incidents I read about that have been bugging me for months now because I cannot find them anywhere. I can't remember what books I read them in. I've been wanting to find them because I can't remember the details. And I kick myself that I didn't record them somewhere where I can find them again.

That's when I knew I had to develop a different system because as I have read more, it has become harder to go back and find what I am looking for. I have filled dozens of notebooks with quotes and ideas from my reading and it has become unruly. Sometimes moms ask if they can just make one notebook—why do there need to be so many? Well, you can. And if that works for you, go for it. I can tell you Thomas Jefferson kept a Commons Book and as far as I can tell, he wrote as he went along. That worked for me for awhile, but I can no longer keep track of things with that. Abraham Lincoln wrote ideas down on a piece of board with charcoal from the fire. His system worked because he didn't erase what he wrote down until he retained it in his memory. Some people have developed wonderful memories like that. I haven't.

That's why I have created so many different notebooks for myself. It helps me organize my learning.

I used to do a presentation on notebooking where I suggested these various notebooks that I've been using. The problem was that now set a standard and I had moms who were afraid they weren't doing it "right" or were frustrated that they couldn't work all the notebooks into their lives.

So I am backing off of that approach and instead want to share principles behind notebooking with a few suggestions and then let you choose what works for you! And that will change over time.

First rule: If you have not yet found something you want to hold on to, then there's not really a need to start a notebook. The same goes for your children. Once you assign notebooking, you've killed the spirit of it. Instead, feed the desire in your children by letting your children see you notebook for yourself. Maybe in the beginning, set aside a Friday afternoon or other time in the week for notebooking. Put the colored pens and papers and stickers and pictures on the table, put on some music, pull out a plate of cookies or healthy snacks and have a notebooking party to capture the things you want to

hold on to from the week. You don't have to do it every single day, unless you want to! In time, that's exactly what will happen. It will just become an enjoyable part of the learning process and will likely happen every single day. Romance their hearts in the beginning.

I think one of the biggest roadblocks to notebooking I've seen is that moms are unsure what should go into the notebook. Notebooking is a big thing in the homeschooling community, but almost all that I have seen is about notebooking facts and information. While there is nothing wrong with that, it seems there is a better use of the time and energy when you are educating the heart. I can access any fact or information instantly on my phone when the need arises. What's the capital of West Virginia? What year was Abraham Lincoln born? Where did Charles Dickens live? What books did he write? I don't want to fill my notebooks with facts and information, except as they pertain to something I really care about. So here's what I think is going on. Most of the recent books are filled with facts and information. There is little to grab the heart. So when I say only write down the ideas that grab the heart, that's a foreign concept if you haven't spent much time in the older books when they wrote for the heart. I can tell you, once you get into the older books, there will be so many thoughts and gems of wisdom that will make you put the book down just to think about it for a minute. Those are the ones you want to capture in your notebooks.

Sterling Sill filled over 25 notebooks, including over 7,500 pages of ennobling thoughts and ideas. He said, "When in my reading I come to some little nugget of an idea that sends a chill up and down my backbone—I take that out and put it in my idea bank." Some of those words he memorizes and thus they become part of him.

So let me throw out a few ideas of what a notebook could look like.

A preschooler could start a notebook of favorite things.

Let your child cut pictures of favorite things out of magazines and glue them on pages. Barebooks can be used for a number of projects like this. They are inexpensive, have hard covers and have a more permanent feel to them. You can do the same thing with fine art. Let them pick their favorites and print out whatever size you want. You can make them full size and put them in sheet protectors in a notebook, or make them small and pick up a little dollar photo album at Walmart and slip the pictures in the sleeves.

You can begin to make their collections of favorite poetry. Maybe use a Barebooks to create Mother Goose rhymes for toddlers. Let them pick one, you write it down while they watch, and then let them color pictures on it to illustrate it. You can do that with poetry for your older children. They may create several collections of poetry over the years. There's not a right or wrong way. Some may like to copy a poem on a full sheet of paper, illustrate it or not, and put it in a 3-ring notebook. Or pick up a pretty blank journal at the store and let them start copying their favorite poetry in it.

I like to have a literature gems notebook. Again, begin any way you want. Let children illustrate something from a fairy tale you've just told them. You lead the way. Keep them in some kind of a book. They love to share what they have created and this gives a fun way to go back through their books and let them narrate and recall the stories or their favorite part of the stories. This encourages an oral interchange—remember the importance of the voice?

Drawing will help them develop the fine motor skills they'll need to write letters. And drawing is usually a lot more enjoyable to a child! In a biography of Beatrix Potter, it said that "writing came easily, for Beatrix could copy shapes of letters as quickly as she copied leaves and flowers."

As they get older and are writing, let them copy down favorite parts of books they are reading. Let that be their copy work. The act of copying words and sentences is teaching

them language arts and is providing an enjoyable and meaningful way to practice their handwriting skills. Some of our greatest writers learned to write by copying down the writings of other great writers. Again, it can be on individual pages of any size or in Barebooks.

I like to create literature pages by printing out illustrations from the books if possible. The pictures help me instantly recall stories I may have forgotten. While I read, if something strikes me, I put a little post it tab on it. When I go back, I look at what I marked and decide if it's worth remembering enough that I want to copy it. In that way, I hold on to the gems—that which means most to me. I don't have to copy down the entire passage—just enough to trigger a memory and then I put a page number by it so I can find it again. Notebooking in this way helps me read for meaning. I'm always on a treasure hunt for something worthwhile to hold on to. If the books I am reading consistently aren't yielding anything worthy of holding on to, I tell myself I better look for some more worthwhile reading! There's nothing wrong with a little cotton candy, but it will make you sick if that's all you eat.

Simply reading through this literature gems notebook keeps re-feeding my heart from what I read. If I didn't take the time to do it, so much of what I read will be gone.

When I read biographies, it's like inviting great souls to dine with me. I listen to their stories and I want to hold on to the parts that really inspire me or stories they tell that I love. So I have a great souls notebook. Mine is a 3-ring binder that I add individual pages to. I like that best because I arrange them in chronological order and it helps me begin to sort out who was living at what time in history. It becomes a story of the world, as well. I insert a few world events pages to provide context of what's happening when these people live. I even create pages for my ancestors. I use lots of pictures, especially fine art. I just do a google search and find the images that are going to best help me remember this person. A picture is

worth 750,000 words, remember? I want to know what this person looks like. And then this is where I copy those gems from my reading or at least enough, with a reference to where I can find it again. This notebook along with my literature gems are my greatest treasures. I love looking through these notebooks and remembering all that I have learned. It can also facilitate conversation as you sit down and look through your child's notebook with him or her and allow them to talk about it.

A younger child's notebook of great souls may only have pictures and names. Maybe they can draw the pictures themselves. That works, too.

One mother shared that her dyslexic daughter really struggled with writing until she started hearing and reading fascinating stories of real people who inspired her heart. She created a book because she wanted to remember their stories and their words and even though it was extremely difficult and challenging for her to write, she pushed through because it was something she wanted for herself and her written language improved in every way.

A notebook can be a simple book of happy moments. Every night before you go to bed, take time to write down one happy thing that happened that day. It fosters an attitude of gratitude. You can help a child do that—in the beginning, you do the writing until the child can write himself. You can grab a little calendar notebook at the store that has a few lines for each day and that, too, is a notebooking activity for the heart.

Louisa May Alcott said she was encouraged by her parents to keep a diary in which she wrote down her thoughts and feelings and fancies. "Even at an early age Louisa's journal was a record of deep feelings and of a child's sacred emotions."

So a personal journal is a form of notebooking. Again, many great writers learned to write by keeping personal journals.

Pestalozzi used notebooking in his schools. "They would draw pictures of things, make collections of leaves and flowers, and keep a record of their observations and discoveries. Through keeping these records they learned to read and write."

Nature journaling, such as John Muir Laws teaches, is another form of notebooking. I was talking with a mother who said that her daughter did no formal science classes throughout high school, but she was a big nature journaler. When she decided she wanted to be a nurse, and realized she would have to take science level college courses, she panicked. But the first semester she called home and said she was at the top of the class. Because she had been trained to see the details, she knew exactly what the professor was trying to teach and she caught on very quickly.

You may also want to start a cultural notebook, as a family or as individuals. As you learn about different countries, you may want a place for the children to copy favorite recipes from that country or to write about their cultural celebrations. Let them take pictures of themselves and their crafts or their family cultural night dinners and glue them in a book. What a source of happy memories! You can either create separate Barebooks for each country or put dividers in a notebook. Whatever works for you. You may even create a notebook of places in the world you want to visit one day. Google a picture, glue it on the page, and let your children write what happened there and what they would want to look for if they ever got to visit one day. Let them copy a few words from the language on a page or helpful phrases: How are you? What is your name? Where is the train station? This can be a place where you can keep maps of the different countries and whenever you read a story that mentions a place, let them put a dot on their map so they can see where it's taking place. This is geography taught in a natural way. Or at least, always go to the world globe or map and let them see where it is you are

talking about.

A lot of these activities are the precursors to research skills. These kind of notebooks will be something they will want to keep, rather than the thousands of worksheets that go in the garbage. I've only suggested a few ideas. Try out different ways and see what works for you. There is no right or wrong way to do it. The key points to remember are to not force it—make it an enjoyable activity and let it connect to something your child cares about. The best way to teach notebooking is to do it yourself and let them see you doing it.

A friend of mine said her 15-year-old son was hugging his notebook one day. He said, "Mom, if anyone knew what was inside this notebook, they would know it's a treasure of great worth." That's when you know you have achieved notebooking success.

Delphian Course

For all you mothers who sometimes feel like your brain is getting soggy or who regret never having gone to college, I have something to share with you that has the potential to fill your heart right up. I was at a library sale and picked up ten volumes of an old 1913 series called The Delphian Reading Course. I had no idea the treasure I had just brought home for $20.00.

Let me read to you from the Delphian handbook: "Woman has always recognized as her chief business the task of making the world a better place to live in. In civilization as well as in savagery men strive for the means of living, and women make the living worth striving for." I know that's not very politically correct in our world today. We've lost the idea that we need a balance of feminine and masculine working together and are trying to make men and women the same. But we are not the same. Women are softer and have been given divine gifts of nurturing. As part of that movement of elevating the role of women, the Delphian Society was formed in 1910 with the purpose of educating women. It was difficult for busy moms and wives to go away to college, so they brought college home to them. A Reading Course was designed that gave women the equivalent of a Bachelor's Degree in Classic and Humanities Studies, even if a woman could only spare 15 minutes a day.

The study included history, literature, philosophy, poetry, fiction, drama, art, ethics and music. The focus was on culture. It was a study for cultivating the heart, "to know the best that has been thought and said in the world" with the aim of

personal improvement of each member who, in turn, would lift all of society. As they said, it was all about the business of life, not just learning of facts and information. It was about making of the mind, "a mansion of all lovely thoughts."

As the Delphian handbook says, "If a love for things worthwhile—the lasting and enduring thoughts and sentiments of men—increases, and the desire for wider knowledge is aroused, the hopes and ambitions of the Delphian Society shall have been largely realized."

The name was inspired by the Delphian oracle of ancient Greece, a vaporous, voice of an unseen priestess who inspired wisdom and comfort. Doesn't that describe the role of a woman—quiet whisperings to the heart of a child in the dark, words of encouragement to a discouraged husband? History books may not give her credit, but such quiet voices have influenced and even changed the course of history.

Understanding and appreciation were the objectives of the course. They were taught: "For the many problems that confront us, we need understanding, and for the enjoyment of all the beauty in which the world abounds, we need appreciation."

When the reading course was first released, it was intended for individual study. But it soon became apparent that the study was so much more beneficial when women came together once a month to engage in conversation and share what they were learning and so Delphian chapters were formed. Within 20 years, there were over 2,000 Delphian chapters operating across the nation. In the front of their new handbook are the words: "Ten small discussional groups in a community will do more to create a new way of life than a hundred mass meetings with a thousand in attendance at each….

"Who can estimate the value of these circles, which are multiplying throughout the country? Who can fail to see the possibility for the future in thus banding together earnest women of each community? Broader vision, fewer prejudices,

greater tolerances must necessarily follow in the wake of centers where enthusiasm for a higher plane of thought is being enkindled. Everywhere are vast resources of the wealth that is most needed today, that of mind and spirit."

If we would improve a community, we must first improve the individuals who make up the community. Libraries, art galleries, and museums would be waste in a village where none could read or write. To make them of any use, the individuals must be brought to improve themselves. And that is the focus of these study groups.

"When one busy housewife—[I know—I hate that word too, so I'll change it.] When one busy mom "finds time to call over the telephone in order to discuss with her friend some phase of the Renaissance or a Bach fugue; or when the conversation turns from personalities to modern poetry, or art, we may then truthfully say that the interest in cultural subjects has become an everyday habit instead of an occasional diversion. And this is what invariably happens when two or three Delphians are gathered together."

Women who were part of the Delphian movement turned knowledge into a living force in their everyday lives.

It was after learning all about this movement of women and the work of the Delphians that I called a couple of friends, Marley Billings and Jen Goostrey, and I said, "I think it's time to help organize the moms." They were already feeling it too, and Mothers of Influence was born. They had been meeting with a circle of friends for a couple of years and felt the power of those relationships in their lives. You will learn more in Section Six.

But getting back to the Delphian Reading Course, I was absolutely thrilled with what I read. If I could have designed a college level course of study for the moms in this group, this is what it would look like. This is a study for the heart, with an emphasis at looking at the languages of art, music, poetry and literature of the ages with just enough history to put it in

context. And I especially love that when you study the ancient Egyptians or Babylonians or Greeks or Medieval times, you get a glimpse into their homes and their family lives; their systems of education and learning, things that are relevant to us in our everyday lives.

Although you may be able to find a set of used books through eBay or Amazon, we have posted all of them in our online library. We have also brought them back into print so that you can use a hard copy to underline and take notes. They're available in our store.

I also tracked down the nearly impossible to find study guides that went with them and compiled them into a study guide with questions that can help to direct your thoughts. I usually don't like study guides like that, but I find that this one is very helpful to pick up on concepts or ideas I may have missed in just reading through the text.

Although you can start in Volume I and read straight through, it's really not necessary. And so I broke down all the topics and placed them into the Rotation schedule. You will find Delphian reading in the High School sections as well as in the Mother's University topics. They are in the yellow blocks. I was also excited to find that many of the books they recommended to read for further study are available on Internet Archive and so I linked those books as well.

If you do it with the Rotation schedule, you will be learning the same things as your kids but at a different level. You may even have high schoolers who are interested in going through the Delphian Course.

Margaret Eggleston, my first storytelling friend, tells moms how to develop a rich personality:

"By loving the beautiful, by reading the worthwhile, by filling the mind with those things that are worth passing on, by cultivation of a cheery disposition, by striving toward high ideals."

All these things are accomplished with the Delphian

Reading Course. It may not be the study you begin with, but I just wanted to share with you what it is for when you are ready.



SECTION SIX:

Journey of a Lifetime

Where do I go from here?



IN SUMMARY

Look Heavenward. "God directs."

These are the differences between mind and heart as I now see them:

The mind is informed; the heart is inspired.
The mind feeds on facts; the heart feeds on truth.
The mind asks, "Why?" The heart wonders, "Why not?"
The mind is molded through questioning; the heart asks its own questions.
The mind is verbose; the heart relishes brevity.
The mind seeks temporal and temporary pleasure; the heart seeks spiritual and eternal joy.
The mind clings to reason; the heart clings to faith.
The mind often feels superior because of its vast knowledge; the heart often feels humbled by all it doesn't yet understand.
The mind is critical; the heart is compassionate.
The mind thinks; the heart feels.
The mind seeks to be understood; the heart longs to understand.
The mind is knowledgeable; the heart is wise.

Five Things Review

I recently read this little story of Mozart in an old music appreciation book:

"The last ten years of his short life Mozart spent in the great pleasure-loving city of Vienna, in extreme poverty. He had to earn what he could by playing at concerts and giving piano lessons and could make hardly anything out of what he wrote, because people didn't understand it and wouldn't buy it. He was so poor that sometimes he could not get food, or even coal in winter, and one cold morning he and his wife were found, by a friend who went to call on them, waltzing together to keep warm. And yet, when his publisher said to him, 'Write in a more easy, popular style, or I will not print a note or give you a cent,' he replied: 'Then, my good sir, I have only to resign myself and die of hunger.'

"Now if Mozart could willingly face starvation rather than lower his ideal of what good music should be, and if not only he, but Bach, and Beethoven, and Schubert, and Schumann, and Wagner, and scores of others, could even glory to be poor, and unknown and overworked, for the sake of making music, oughtn't you and I be glad to take some trouble in order to appreciate it?"[17]

Sometimes I worry that I am placing an ideal before you that causes you to feel inadequate or guilty or even overwhelmed. I am frequently told that what I am teaching is too hard to understand and apply. And I start thinking about how can I make all of this easier for you.

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[17] Daniel Mason, *The Appreciation of Music* (1907).

But given what I know, I can't teach or offer anything less than what has been placed on my heart to teach you.

Actually, none of this is really hard. But it does go against how most of us have been raised to think. To think differently requires filling ourselves up with new thoughts to think, creating new neural pathways. That is why I offer you so much to think about. Over time, if you persistently feed and nourish the thoughts being planted, you will naturally start looking at learning and life through new eyes and through a new heart. And your actions will follow.

As we learn to sing this new-old song of the heart, I am reminded of the importance of rhythm in music which I talked about in an earlier talk. The measure bars in music maintain the order so that the song can be sung.

As you have gone through Catch the Vision, you may have noticed some references to five measure bars that are in operation—five guiding principles; five things, five lessons that form the framework of our work here. They can be used as measuring tools as you consider ways to share what you are learning with others.

I truly believe that if we can take these five things to heart, we will find ourselves right in the middle of the great healing of our broken world that has been promised; a promise that should fill us with hope.

Let me explain where these five things came from.

A couple of years ago, I was invited to speak at a conference and share what I thought could change the world for good. Immediately five things came to my mind and I quickly jotted them down and they provided the framework of my presentation. I had learned them through the same process of learning and creation I teach you—that journey of exploration and discovery. They were the culmination of my years of study, not only of sacred writings and writings about education, but patterns from the lives of the great men and women who have made notable contributions to the world. Their

lives provided evidence of the principles in action that I had been learning about.

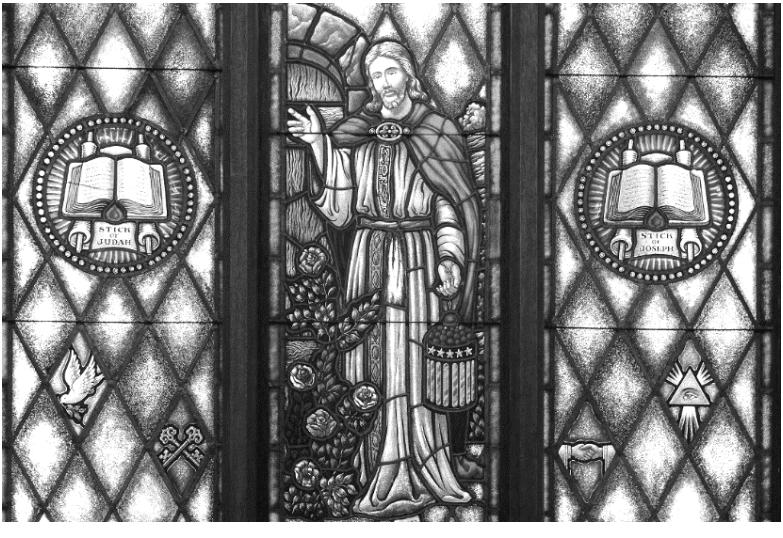
And then, in the moment they were needed, they just came out of me.

I was curious about the number five and perhaps not coincidentally, the number five is the number of regrowth and regeneration.

Not long after I got home from that conference, my mom called me and told me about a book she was reading. It was called *The Washington Hypothesis* by Timothy Ballard. The thing that grabbed her attention was that he framed his writings around a stained-glass window found in the chapel where he had grown up going to church in La Cañada, California.

It was the same building I went to church growing up and I, too, had spent each Sunday looking at that beautiful stained-glass window behind the organ in the chapel and wondering what the symbols meant.

The day a copy of the book came, I stayed up late reading it as Tim gave his interpretations of the symbols. I finally tried to go to sleep, but my thoughts were restless. I couldn't quite put my finger on it when the thought very plainly came to me:



Look at the window again. All five lessons are there.

And they were! Plain as day. But they were different than Tim's. Which one of us was right? And the thought immediately came: He was seeing them through the eyes of a man. Men are given charge over governance and order and that's what he discussed in his book. I was seeing the symbols through the eyes of a woman.

Later, I invited a dear friend, Donna Nielsen, to spend the afternoon with me to tell me what she was reading in the window. She is a scholar on early Christian symbols, and she added to my understanding.

The thing about a symbol is that it has layers of meanings. It is said a single letter of the Hebrew alphabet can offer 70 layers.

What that means is that I can offer this window to you as a way to instantly recall the most vital lessons of what you are learning through the Well-Educated Heart so that we can use them as a framework for our work moving forward, as I just mentioned.

One more side note before moving forward—I contacted Tim's friend he mentioned in the book because he had posted an image of the stained-glass window online and I wanted permission to use it. He taught me more about the window. So far, no one has been able to identify its creator or what he was thinking about as he created it. But I know it was created just after World War II. Later, I learned that many of the beautiful churches and cathedrals in Europe were bombed during the war. Someone in Southern California had the idea that funds could be raised to rebuild those churches in Europe by purchasing the shattered glass of those stained glass windows and using it in the States to create new ones. That is why there are many stained-glass windows in the churches of Southern California built in that era. Was this one of them? I don't know. But wouldn't that add another layer of appreciation as we talk of healing a broken world?

You can't help but notice the central figure of Jesus Christ. In using this, I am excluding no one. He is the most unifying figure on the earth for all men and women of goodwill who desire peace on earth. Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim all acknowledge and reverence Him as a great teacher and value His example of living a humble life and caring for the poor. He, Himself, was Jewish. Despite denominational differences in religious practices in the Christian world, Christ is still the common central figure of their faith.

Notice the gift He is bringing—it is the gift of light, in particular, spiritual light. Wrapped inside that gift are love, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control and JOY. Notice these are the Unseen things of the world—they cannot be tested and measured. But when all the temporal temporary things we see with our eyes crumble into dust, these gifts remain, always and forever. They are Eternal gifts.

But He can only stand at the door and knock. There is no handle on His side. The door must be opened from within. And notice He isn't standing at the door of a business building or a grand cathedral. He is standing at the door of a home and waits patiently to be allowed in with His gift. This is a personal offering. It appears that it is nighttime, a time of darkness or why would He be carrying a lighted lantern?



The rest of the symbols on the window provide the clues as to how that door can be opened so that we can receive that gift of Light. Look at how the symbols are arranged along the bottom of the window—they almost look like a smile, don't they? This is a plan for happiness and joy.

Now. Lesson #1: The stars and the stripes you see on the lamp have become symbols of freedom. Learning in God's

way requires an atmosphere of freedom and choice. The spirit of compulsion is counter to all we are trying to do. "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." They go hand in hand.

Why does freedom matter?

Do you recall the example I gave of the escape room? If you have gone to an escape room, you have felt the thrill of solving puzzles and connecting clues. Imagine if you went to an escape room and they simply gave you a list of tasks to complete. Open the drawer on the dresser and here is the combination to the lock. Now look under the bed and unlock the box. Here is the combination. Everyone will escape, but who cares? And more importantly, who will come back?

I can guarantee there would be no franchise of escape rooms if they incorporated the methods being used in our classrooms of daily handing our students pre-digested information and tasks to be completed.

It is the thrill of exploration and discovery; of finding answers to our own questions and having those light bulb moments when ideas connect and come together that give the joy to learning and make lifelong learners of us, and most importantly, bear good fruit of that learning.

Like Lincoln suggested: Require a man to produce one bale of hay, and he will produce one bale of hay. Give him a field of hay and tell him he can keep the profit of all he can do, and he will produce ten times more.

There is little or no progress in slavery or compulsion.

Every time a pocket of freedom has opened up in our world, the poets, artists, scientists, writers, inventors have flocked to it like a moth to the flame. We saw it happen in the Dutch Republic and in the Golden Age of the Saracens and in America.

Yet we somehow don't let go of the false idea that a child will not perform if we don't compel him to do so. This is a grave mistake. Our compulsory system of education has not

born good fruit. It is time to set it free.

Lesson #1: We must give our children freedom to learn and room to grow. Freedom to discover is essential for growth and joy.

Lesson #2: Now look at the first of the four symbols that form the smile. It is a dove carrying an olive branch. My friend



Donna had taught me that in the early Christian church, everyone knew that the sign of the dove represented the divine feminine; the sacred feminine. White is a symbol of purity. And the olive branch has long represented peace. When I saw the symbol, I immediately thought of mothers and their vital role in ushering in an era of peace.

"Mother-love works magic on humanity."

It has been pointed out that, "Chess has three parts: opening, middle and end game. The opening is the development of pieces, you're setting up your strategy. The middle game is the implementation of your strategy. The end game is hopefully where you are seeing the fruition of your strategy and you're closing the trap. The queen is the most powerful piece on the board and it is conventional chess wisdom that you postpone your queen for as long as you can. The longer you can delay developing your queen the more likely you will have your most powerful piece for the end game. The Lord is the master strategist and knows how to win…the Lord [is] bringing his queens into play in preparation for the end game."[18]

"Every civilized nation owes much to its women. And the student of history clearly perceives that the advancement of any nation is marked by the progress of its women."[19]

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[18] Danette Peterson

[19] Phebe A. Hanaford, *Daughters of America* (1882).

It has been written: "In proportion as woman is elevated and promoted, will the divine religion of Jesus prevail…I am fully persuaded, that emancipated, enlightened, and enfranchised, she will be equal to the demand. Commissioned by the great Messiah, and clothed in the armor of affection, she will go forth to conquer the world with the sword of the Spirit. The shining hosts of heaven will enlist under her banner of love; and Christ himself will lead the way. The whole world will surrender to her divine command, and before her triumphant march the powers of darkness flee….

"Woman is God's appointed agent of morality, the teacher and inspirer of those feelings and sentiments which are termed the virtues of humanity; and the progress of these virtues, and the permanent improvement of our race, depend on the manner in which her mission is treated by man." [20]

Red is the color of the male and blue of the female. Notice how the red robe on the Christ figure wraps around the blue. This represents the protective role of the man, as he wraps himself around the woman to provide and protect in every way so that she can perform her role. They are as one whole, but with different essential roles—the woman as the primary nurturer, the man as the protector and provider.

At the close of Tocqueville's work on America, he remarks that, if he were required to point out the cause of the wonderful advance in prosperity and civilization of the American people, he should reply, "It was the superior character of their women."

It is mother-love we are speaking of here. Women do not have to have children of their own to possess it and be of great influence. Much of the writings of the heart educators as well as those who advanced the cause of women's rights were women who never married or had children.

A great spiritual leader has said: "[Women] have the

[20] Leo Miller, *Woman and the Divine Republic* (1874).

spiritual power to change the world."[21]

So Lesson #2: We must elevate and support women in their vital role as mothers. You are doing an essential work. The hand that rocks the cradle truly rules the nations. Mother-love plays a vital role in nurturing hearts.



Lesson #3: Now notice the second symbol in the bottom row we are looking at. Here are the keys to unlock the door and let Him in.

In the fourteenth century, a skilled workman who lived near the city of Venice, created an instrument with one of our first keyboards. He was the one who gave it the name "key" board. The name came from the word *clavis* which means something which gives its owner power to open a closed door. He wrote, "These small bits of wood give me the power to unlock the sound which is in my organ, and so I shall call them keys."

The Arts—Music, Visual Arts, Poetry and Story—are the keys a mother will use to soften and open the hearts of her children to spiritual light. Hard hearts block the light.

"Every great art is a special language of the human spirit, and he who desires to awaken his artistic [and spiritual] nature will learn to read all the languages…. [E]ach art is a distinct language, which expresses some aspect of the human soul and reveals some truth which can be apprehended in no other way."[22]

Happy is the person who is fluent in all of them.

The Arts reach the deepest parts of our souls. All the storms and turbulence and tempests are at the surface of the waters. In the ocean depths, as in the deeps of our souls, it is

[21] Russell M. Nelson (2020).

[22] S.S. Curry, *Imagination and Dramatic Instinct* (1896).

calm and still and quiet. It is not hard to see why all the Arts are used in healing therapies.

Let's briefly review each language.

MUSIC:

> God is its author, and not man; he laid
> The keynote of all harmonies; he planned
> All perfect combinations, and he made
> Us so we could hear and understand.

Music is known as the quickening art.

Confucius taught: "Harmony has the power to draw Heaven downwards to earth. It inspires men to love the good, and to do their duty. If one should desire to know whether a kingdom is well governed, if its morals are good or bad, the quality of its music shall furnish forth the answers."

VISUAL ARTS:

"It will take years before you come to a full appreciation of art; but when at last you have it, you will be possessed of one of the purest, loftiest and most ennobling pleasures that the civilized world can offer you."[23]

The gift of fine art is that it opens the inner eye to recognize beauty everywhere in the world. And drawing produces exactness of thought. Once you slow down long enough to draw what you are seeing, mysteries will unfold before you.

POETRY

"O Poet, what power lies in thy magic wand! No sooner dost thou touch us, the dull gray day is aflame with color and sunshine."

The mission of poetry is to "make glad the hearts of man." It does not teach—it inspires. "Poetry pierces past the outer husk of things into their inner reality, which it interprets for

[23] John Van Dyke, *How to Judge a Picture* (1889).

the soul."

You may remember Robin Williams performance in Dead Poets Society when he said: "We don't read and write poetry because it's cute. We read and write poetry because we are members of the human race. And the human race is filled with passion. And medicine, law, business, engineering, those are noble pursuits and necessary to sustain life. But poetry, beauty, romance, love, these are what we stay alive for."

STORY

Jesus had just three years of a mortal ministry, of which we have record of only about 35 days. What remains of those 35 days are primarily stories. That should give us a clue of the power of stories in our lives.

"Storytelling is an ageless and beautiful art. When the lights are low and your child is in a quiet, receptive mood, the stories told him will never be forgotten and their influence will follow him the rest of his life."

Through the arts—Music, Visual Arts, Poetry and Story—our "souls are like a well-tuned harp, when [we] are touched by the spirit of inspiration there is a kindred chord in [our] bosoms, they vibrate to the touch, and [we] are filled with sacred melody."[24]

Nature is God's classroom where He immerses us in all the languages of the heart and teaches us directly.

As Elizabeth Barrett Browning penned: "Earth's crammed with heaven. And every common bush afire with God. But only he who sees takes off his shoes. The rest sit around and pluck blackberries."

"If the trees and flowers, the clouds and the wind, all tell wonderful stories to the child he has sources of happiness of which no power can deprive him."[25]

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[24] John Taylor, *Journal of Discourses Volume X* (1865).

[25] Flora Cooke, *Nature Myths and Stories for Little Children* (1895).

The Arts are how we cultivate beautiful Hearts. And Beautiful Hearts will build a Beautiful World.

Lesson #3: The Arts are the keys to soften and open hearts.

Lesson #4: If you now look at the third symbol along the bottom, you see two hands clasped. If you look closely, one of the hands has lace around the sleeve. This calls to mind that creation requires the joining of male and female. They must work in unison. We have talked about the woman preparing hearts. But hearts must also learn to be obedient and conform themselves to true principles and laws.



We instinctively connect the female to the heart with its feelings and desires and the male to the Mind with its facts, rules and reasoning. The men have traditionally been the Rulers of the world.

But notice—the Heart forms before the Brain within the womb and emotions develop before reasoning outside the womb. The heart can continue to beat when brain waves cease, but when the heart stops beating, life is over.

This symbol reminds us that all learning needs to start in the heart, the home of our desires. Love is the foundation of all true learning.

This is the first part of the Pattern for Learning and Creation: Heart first, then Mind.

For example, in school:

What good are word decoding skills if a child has no desire to read?

What good is it if a child can construct a sentence perfectly if he has nothing he wants to write about?

We cannot keep pushing academic skills and pouring facts into our kids they don't care about and expect a good educational harvest. Although the Swiss educator Pestalozzi

taught, "It is for a long time the business of the Heart before it is the business of the mind," he understood both Heart and Mind are necessary and work hand in hand.

As do Faith and Reason, Art and Science, Zeal and Knowledge, Desire and Obedience, Liberty and Law. There cannot be one without the other.

The third part of the pattern is the result of what happens when the two parts work in unison—the result is creation, an act of divinity. Creation is the fruit of our learning. For example, Michelangelo's heart was filled with beautiful ideas and he developed the skills to express them, but the genius of his work was found in the inspiration that came to him from a Higher Power in the very act of creation, which he freely acknowledged. "My unassisted heart is barren clay."

Throughout history, we can see the pendulum swinging back and forth between the two sides. The Golden Ages of History have been when Heart and Mind have worked in unison, and then amazing things have been created.

Once you recognize this pattern, you'll find it everywhere.

You'll find it in nature, where the plant requires a strong root system and nutrient rich soil to nourish the plant, which mothers are providing through the Arts. Without it, the plant will wither in the sun and will never grow the flower, which is where the seeds to multiply are found.

The pattern is in music. The melody is the part we hum. The rhythm or beat maintains order and keeps moving the music along, just like our laws and principles. But the deepest feelings are stirred by the harmonies. If the beat drowns out the melody, it shuts down feeling. Plus you cannot harmonize a beat. Likewise strong, repetitive academic beat will kill a love of learning. And the powers of creation will dry up.

The pattern is in history. First came Ancient Greece with its love of the Arts and Beauty. Then Ancient Rome with its focus on Law and then Jesus came and taught of a Spiritual Kingdom.

In fact He taught the pattern:

If ye love me, keep my commandments, and I will give you the Spirit of Truth.

To keep the commandments without first loving was to be as the Pharisees who He described as whited sepulchres filled with dead men's bones. But to love without doing what He said was to be as the hypocrites. To neglect either heart or mind is to lose the gift of the spirit.

I believe that applies to us in our learning.

We are commanded to Ask, Seek and Knock, which is the Pattern for Learning. We ask because there is something we desire to know about. God waits for us to Ask. He knows the folly of providing an answer to a question we haven't yet asked. Likewise, we need to allow our children the freedom to ask their own questions because it is the beginning of learning. We then seek and study to find our answer, and then we Knock and the spirit opens the door to our understanding, and more importantly, gives us the right-use of our knowledge and understanding. That is right-use-ness; righteousness. It is the fruit of our learning.

One more example. The Old and New Testaments open with Stories of families for the heart. Then come doctrines, rules and commandments. The last books are rich in meaning and can only be fully understood with divine help.

Like I said, as you become aware of the Pattern, you'll start seeing it everywhere.



Lesson #4: Creation requires Heart and Mind acting in unison. But creation always starts in the Heart with vision and desire.

LESSON #5: The fourth symbol across the bottom of the stained glass has a long history and has been given many interpretations—and many misinterpretations. Franklin Roosevelt added it to the

back of the dollar bill, where it sits atop an unfinished pyramid or tower of bricks which calls to mind the story of the Tower of Babel, also made of bricks and also unfinished. Babylon grew up around the tower and Babylon has come to be synonymous with the world or Man's ways of thinking and doing things, which is not God's way at all. Babylon is destined to fall.

What are some of Man's ways of thinking? Let me review some of the things you've heard me talk about before. Remember the artist's renditions of the tower of Babel? The purpose is external. It is designed so that one can climb the path that circles round and round the outside of the tower with the intention that one will eventually be able to climb all the way to heaven by his own efforts.

Although artists have depicted the tower with windows, when I look inside, it is dark and empty. It's not designed to go inside. The tower climber's progress is visible to everyone. Tower climbers can compare their progress with other climbers. Those higher up on the tower feel confident and self-assured; they are in control of their destiny, while those lower down often feel overwhelmed and discouraged. There are yet so many stairs to climb. And sadly, some of those highest on the tower look down upon those who are far behind. So focused are they on their own climb, they offer no helping hand to those further down the tower.

Although the tower was never finished, I picture that had it been completed, it would have eventually come to a point at the very top where there is room for only one person to stand. I wonder how many other people the climber has to push out of the way to claim the spot. And although the tower climber will see how much higher the heavens are above him, he will be powerless to take one step higher. He will have reached his limit; the peak of his performance.

This represents the ways of the world. And don't we see it all around us? The world is concerned with all outward

things—the size of our bank account; how many trophies we have earned; how many letters behind our name. We obsess over the size and shape of our body, how beautiful we are, what kind of clothes we wear. We are conditioned to climb to the top of the class, climb to the top of the corporate ladder. We must aim to be #1—to be the winning team, to be the fastest runner, the highest scorer. But there is only one winner. The rest are losers. It's an endless push to the top. Yet, for those who make it, they often look around and say, "Is that all there is?" And they look for another tower to climb. After all, it's lonely at the top.

Looking from the ground up, the heights they reach seem dazzling and magnificent. Look what man has done! But from heaven's point of view, Man's achievements are as a speck of dust in this great universe of ours.

We very much use a tower model in education. From the moment a child starts to climb, he is constantly compared with other climbers. We test and measure to see how high up the tower he has climbed. We constantly talk about levels. We congratulate ourselves when our children score on a higher level than the average child and panic when they fall below level. But we are only testing those outward things that can be tested and measured—which completely excludes the inward condition of the heart.

For most students in this system of learning, as they walk across the stage and pick up their diploma, rather than a commencement to a lifetime of learning, it is a conclusion. Surveys show that the majority of graduates will never pick up another book, and if they do, it certainly won't be a book of history or poetry or great literature. They've reached the peak of learning.

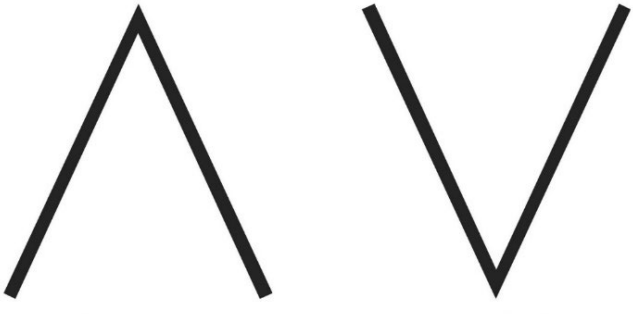
Even God and heaven is a destination point, not unlike The Amazing Race where Phil waits at the end while the contenders fight and scramble and push and strive and overcome challenges, trying to be faster and smarter and outwitting

other contestants, all the while knowing that despite their best efforts, they may arrive and find out they've been eliminated.

Now look at the background of the stained-glass window. Notice its green tint—again, the sign of regeneration and regrowth. Perhaps the artist didn't have it in mind, but all over, I am reading—Flip the tower over. Flip the tower over. Flip the tower over.

When we flip the tower over, we are now looking at a symbol representing the opposite of the world.

I call it a temple or a holy place way of living. It represents letting God prevail in our lives. As Paul taught, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?"



World's Way Heaven's Way

Look what happens—we are now balancing on a single point, but it is strong enough to hold up all eternity. That rock upon which we build is Jesus Christ. He is the anchor to my soul. He is not a destination point; He is my traveling companion. He is in and through all things.

I cannot expect Him to dwell in my dirty bathroom. I must prepare a place where He can come—a place fit for a King. Much of our work centers on this very thing.

No expense is spared in the building of our holy buildings. The finest materials are gathered from around the world with great effort and attention placed to the tiniest of details which are all designed to lift our thoughts heavenward. My inward

temple requires nothing less. I strive to see that every thought, every deed, every picture that hangs on the wall of my temple is pure and worthy of Him.

Notice how the direction of the symbol changes. Whereas with the tower, the eye travels out to in, when the symbol is flipped over, the eye travels inside, out. God works from the inside out. Everything He does is about gathering, increasing, expanding, layering, multiplying, lifting—there is no end or limit. There is no peak. His joy is not that He made it to the top; His joy is that He is lifting myriads of His children to enjoy all He enjoys.

We cannot create a vision board for ourselves because He tells us: "Eye hath not seen, neither hath ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man what God hath in store for those who love Him."

How can we begin to set goals or define our mission to take us to this place our hearts cannot even conceive of? Temple thinking requires that we let go and reach up and trust in Him with all our hearts and lean not unto our own understanding. Far from us perfecting ourselves in a program of self-improvement, He personally leads us through a customized hero's journey where we are transformed in ways we could never have planned out for ourselves. And in the process, He makes us better fit to serve our fellow men. His efforts are always multiplied.

In temple thinking, it is the servant, not the Master who is greatest of all. A temple mindset cares more about lifting his neighbor than working on a program of self-improvement. In fact, the only way to climb to higher grounds is to bring someone with you. And look! There isn't one winner and the rest, losers. There is room for everyone at the top! It will expand as wide as all eternity because there is no top. The word eternal means there is no end.

What a different world will be ours if we can manage to flip this tower over. Mothers are the primary ones with the

spiritual strength and divine gifts to do it and who have access to hearts where the only true change can take place.

Others have tried; we must succeed. We must put an end to our consumer mindset and become creators and producers, always with the intention in our heart of how many other people can we bless instead of how can I make myself richer.

The difference between the wheat and the tare is that, at the harvest, the wheat is laden with grain for the purpose of feeding others. The seeds of the tare are toxic.

It's not surprising that this figure of the tower is on the back of our dollar bill for our world has been built on a foundation of gold. Every day, we're warned that foundation is in serious trouble and is threatening to come crashing down around us.

We may feel helpless, but the solution was buried in an ancient tale of the Niebelungenlied. Do you remember it?

In the Rhine River lived three beautiful maidens—the Rhine daughters. Carelessly, one day, they lost the gold that had been entrusted to them by their father. They knew whoever molded the gold into a ring would have all power upon the earth, save love. The hideous little creature, Alberich the Niebelung, who seized it, laughed wickedly, "What do I care for love if I have all the gold I want?" Under his cruel power, the people cried out, "That wretched Alberich, with his ring of gold has made us all slaves! With it he drives us down into the earth to get more gold. This curse of gold has filled our world with despair."

The gold ring passed from one owner to another, causing misery to all who possessed it until it came into the hands of the beautiful and noble Brunhilde—notice, a woman—who courageously returned it to the rightful owners, the Rhinedaughters. At long last, gold no longer held power over the hearts of men. Hurry, worry, falsehood, greed and envy vanished from the earth. Anxiety disappeared from the brows of the tired fathers. A new happiness came into the eyes of the

mothers. A greater power than gold had come to rule the world, and that power was Love.

"The rule now commonly acted upon is that business must be cared for, and men must care for themselves. The principle of action, in the end, must be that men must be cared for, and business must be subservient to this great work."[26]

Then will come the day Isaiah saw: "When a man will be more precious than fine gold."

We need to raise children who will not dream of the mansion they can build for themselves, but will find the joy that comes from using talents and skills to make beautiful homes possible for many others. In fact, the greater the inside riches grow, the less attractive the outer riches become.

Of all the ways Jesus blessed others, money was not one of them.

And this Lesson #5: The direction of growth is inward-out. Heaven works from the inside out. It will be out of the treasures of the heart that a more beautiful world will be created.

"The Lord works from the inside out. The world works from the outside in. The world would take people out of the slums. Christ would take the slums out of people, and then they would take themselves out of the slums. The world would mold men by changing their environment. Christ changes men, who then change their environment. The world would shape human behavior, but Christ can change human nature."[27]

Now notice: If you superimpose the two images—the symbol of the tower and the symbol of the temple, look at what it creates—it is the Star of David; the symbol of



[26] Paul Ansel Chadbourne, quoted in Sarah K. Bolton's *Lives of Poor Boys Who Became Famous* (1885).
[27] Ezra Taft Benson (1985).

Israel.

It is man reaching up towards but more importantly, heaven reaching down. The message God has long tried to deliver through Israel is to let God prevail in our lives and in our world.

So how are we going to accomplish this Herculean feat of flipping the tower over? Well, we've seen that mothers play a key role through using the Arts to open and soften the hearts of their children. It involves desire AND obedience. Now let's look for more clues.

Notice the roses at Jesus' feet. Roses have long been a symbol of beauty. Like the fairy tale, beauty has gone to sleep in our world and the world, in many ways has become gray and lifeless. Sleeping Beauty was named Briar Rose, which these roses call to mind. She was also called the Princess Aurora. Aurora was the Greek goddess of Dawn—a new day awakening. In the Disney version, the Prince picks up his sword of truth and shield of righteousness to fight the evil Maleficent. But it wasn't the killing of evil that awoke the kingdom. The kingdom awoke only when Beauty received True Love's first kiss.

A new world will dawn as we awaken our sense of and love for Beauty.

"Beauty is a quality of divinity, and to live much with the beautiful is to live close to the divine. Every beauty in any form…refines and elevates character."[28]

"A rosebud blooms from the pressure outward of an inner fulness." And so can our world.

"Wisdom is needed for the governance of the world, but beauty is needed for its existence. In arid deserts there is no life. Birds do not sing in the dark of night…. No faith can live that is not beautiful."

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[28] Orison Swett Marden, in "Put Beauty into Life," *Success Magazine*, January 1911.

Now notice that if the four symbols across the bottom of the stained glass form a smile, the two round circles form the eyes and remind us that if the eye be single to the glory of God, the whole body shall be filled with Light. The scriptures are a symbol of His voice and instruction to us. They are the lamp that light our feet.

The capacity to see Beauty is tied into purity of heart. Blessed are the pure in Heart for they shall see God, not only in the life to come, but in the here and now. They will not only see Him in the scriptures, they will see him in the flowers and the trees and the stars, in inspired works of poetry, literature, art and music, the pages of history and in the chapters of their lives.

The pure in heart will see God has been speaking to all His children through all the ages. And the voice has been the same—Lift up your heart and be glad.

"When the multitudes cease to flow into the sanctuary to bathe themselves in God's divine ether, to wash the grime from their soul's garments, to sharpen the dulled instrument of the spirit, that moment the bloom and beauty will begin to pass from our arts, our literature, our music, our laws, and the very springs of civilization will dry up."

It is our job to replenish the springs where our children can "bathe themselves in God's divine ether"; to immerse them in Living Water.

In so doing, we give them new eyes to see, ears to hear, hearts to feel all the Unseen things of the world. It is like being born again into a heavenly kingdom, a kingdom within, where moth and rust cannot destroy.

"There is something in all of us that loves the Beautiful. Wrought into the heart of a beautiful thing is the spirit of Truth itself. The more we love beauty, the more beautiful we are."

"Where you tend a rose,

A thistle cannot grow."

"Fortunate is the person who has been educated to the perception of beauty; he possesses a heritage of which no reverses can rob him. Yet it is a heritage possible to all who will take the trouble to begin early in life to cultivate the finer qualities of the soul, the eye and the heart."[29]

The Mother's University has been organized to teach mothers how to do this, drawing from the writings of the heart educators of the early 20th century, whose words I have abundantly and liberally woven into this Catch the Vision introductory course. Women are gathering into Mothers of Influence circles to support and strengthen each other in this work.

We have been given all we need to accomplish the task, with the help of the Lord.

There is an ancient Iroquois prophecy that outlines the way of the Great Peace. It was a great plan for social order that centered its strength around the family fire. It taught of the essential inner balance of male and female within the self and in all relationships; that it was always in the heart of a thing that its spirit can be found. It taught the Creator's deeds from the heart are always righteous and Sacred.

The Iroquois confederacy planted an evergreen tree as an expression of their commitment to the Great Peace. It represented the Tree of Life, sending its roots deep into the earth to draw its nourishment and strength from the Mother, as did the people. The Mother was wrapped in a robe of purity and wisdom. The Council of Grandmothers assured no structure of tyranny or dictatorship could arise. The branches reached high to the heavens, to the Father.

They taught the family fire will be the strength when the times of change and calamity overcame them. Standing

[29] Orison Swett Marden, in "Put Beauty into Life," *Success Magazine*, January 1911.

together, they were told they would have the strength to withstand the storms that would come. Standing separately, without order, they would easily fall prey to the powers of darkness.

This peace which is born of the heart, and the people who live through the heart, shall be forever.

In the prophecy it said in a day when the ways of the heart were forgotten, and the Great Peace broken, some would manage to run away to the hilly country towards the West where their wounds would begin to slowly heal and a people would seek once more a peaceful way of life and begin to return to divine order seeking harmony. The people living close to the Earth would learn to become strong in their hearts. And as they began to re-establish the principles of the Great Peace among themselves, people would come to them from all over from all nations to learn from them and they would once again walk the way of the Great Peace.

That which is created shall be born of the heart.

Frederick Douglass was right: "It is easier to grow strong children than repair broken men."

I believe we can grow strong children by remembering and applying these five lessons:

1. Freedom to discover is essential for growth and joy.
2. Mother-love plays a vital role in nurturing hearts.
3. The Arts are the keys to soften and open hearts.
4. Creation requires Heart and Mind acting in unison.
5. The direction of growth is inward-out.

While politicians and intellectuals scramble to figure out how to fix the complex problems facing our world, Jesus' ways have always been small and simple. Tend to the kingdom within and all will be well. He tells us to not worry about numbers. You've baked enough bread to know that a little leaven raises an entire loaf, and Jesus likened the kingdom of God to the leaven.

What we are attempting to do may seem impossible. But in the strength of the Lord, we can do all things.

A mother brought her young son to watch the great Polish pianist, Paderewski, perform. Their seats were near the front of the concert hall. While waiting for the performance to begin, the mother visited with friends and didn't notice her boy slip away.

The lights were dimmed and a single spotlight shined on the grand piano on the middle of the stage. It was only then the audience noticed a little boy, seated at the piano, trying to pick out the melody of Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.

Before the mother could rush onstage, Paderewski appeared and walked over to the piano. He quietly whispered in the boy's ear, "Don't quit. Keep playing." The Master then reached down with his left hand and began playing the bass part of the song. Soon his right arm reached around the other side, encircling the child, and added a running obbligato. The crowd was mesmerized by what they saw and heard—Master and Novice—performing together as one.

"In our lives, unpolished though we may be, it is the Master who surrounds us and whispers in our ear, time and time again, 'Don't quit. Keep playing.' And as we do, He augments and supplements until a work of amazing beauty is created. He is right there with all of us, telling us over and over, 'Keep playing.'"

The heavens are watching. Angels stand by ready to assist.

So keep playing!

I have a feeling we are about to be part of something extraordinary.

Belle Ame Dream

I am frequently asked if I have plans to start schools based on Well-Educated Heart principles or if I would support others starting Well-Educated Heart based schools. And the answer is no, for a lot of reasons.

For one, the heart of the mother is central to this work. Her personality, love and influence transcends lesson plans. It is the heart of the child attaching to a mom and growing to be like her that is woven into all that I teach. This is especially true in the prime heart years before the age of eight. It is around the age of eight that neuroscientists verify a child's brain begins to develop its reasoning faculties more fully. That is when it makes more sense to begin to introduce more academics into the learning environment. But even then, an individual path in academics is much more successful than forcing compliance to someone else's timetable.

Every child is different.

The philosophy is grounded in individual growth and adapted to personality, circumstances, capabilities, and inclinations. When you have a classroom of children, you necessarily have to implement more structure to the learning to be able to maintain control. And the more structure in place, the less freedom to grow. We are aiming for that true education that is between a child's soul and God, and that requires a lot of freedom.

The ideal learning environment is the home and today's homes have access to learn absolutely anything you want to learn. It's a miraculous age we are living in! So to stifle learning by fitting it into a one-size fits all curriculum that everyone

passes through is contrary to everything I am trying to teach you.

Remember—we are trying to do something that has never been done before. I believe we can because we have resources available to us that no generation before has had access to. My belief is that we took a wrong turn about a hundred years ago and that there needs to be a course correction. We are seeing the fruit of that age-grouped, compulsory, academic focused, teacher-as-authority path reflected in the state of the world today—and it isn't good. Freedom is shrinking. Hopelessness and despair are rising. Lewdness and vulgarity are growing. Faith, Freedom and Family are all under attack. The world has turned upside down in that bad is now seen as good and good is seen as bad. We can't keep doing what we are doing and expect different results. That is the definition of insanity.

I'm inviting you to think way outside the box and be willing to leave things that are comfortable and familiar to you and try to be among those looking for new paths. We are learning from the past to understand our present so that we can make a course correction for those who follow us.

So when I see people taking a few elements from Well-Educated Heart, such as the rotation schedule or even the arts, and plugging them into an environment or curriculum that is contrary to what we're trying to accomplish, it's not going to get us where we need to be.

I don't have all the answers, but I am taking clues from educational reformers from the past to see what we can do differently.

When the prophet Samuel saw the crumbling state of his people, he opened a school at his home in Ramah for young men. They called him Father. While we don't have a lot of details, we know it included music, stories of their heritage, and these students in his school of prophets, prophets of the Old Testament, were all poets. They served as the leaven for

Israel.

When William Wilberforce felt called by God to rid 18th-Century England of the evil of slavery and to reform its terrible morals, he collaborated with a woman—Hannah More—and the Clapham Sect was formed. That little band of about 20 individuals met in the library in the home of one of its members and this small group changed the course of a nation and the lives of millions. While Wilberforce exerted his influence among the lawmakers of Parliament, it was the pen of More who shaped the hearts of a nation through poetry and storytelling. Had the hearts not been softened, the laws would never have been changed.

When a young clergyman, Nicholas Grundtvig, found his homeland of Denmark in despair after having been ravaged by war, he undertook to save Denmark by songs and music and stories. He inspired a young Christen Kold who rented a house and invited young adults to come—it was the first Danish Folk High School where they were immersed in what you would recognize as a Well-Educated Heart way of life. Soon folk high schools were popping up all over the country and within a few years, Denmark had come to life.

But they were not schools in the traditional way we see schools. They were more like summer camps. Grandtvig taught: "Let them study together and work together and sing and play together. Let them read the Bible for themselves and discuss it among themselves…. Open their eyes to the world around them, open their minds to the world of learning; open their hearts to the world of their fellow men. Let them come to know the richness of life."

And he succeeded.

You see, I am not suggesting an unproven strategy for healing our world.

I am saying the work can be done primarily in our homes and neighborhoods and does not require large institutionalized buildings or government approval and funding.

I have laid the foundation by suggesting to you that change starts in the hearts of the mother. You have been encouraged to gather with other mothers in Mothers of Influence circles to strengthen and support each other in these new-old ways of thinking and raising our children. And the most important part of the work is enriching your own heart.

And now I would like to introduce the next step—the encircling reach to gather and lift others around you. I call this the spirit of Belle Ame. Belle Ame is a French word for beautiful soul. It implies someone with noble, elevated sentiments and thoughts.

When you invite some other families to get together with you and have a cultural night of potluck food from another country while playing music from that country and maybe even learning a folk dance together, that is the spirit of Belle Ame.

When you invite some neighbor kids over and engage in fun, interactive games—without electronics—that is the spirit of Belle Ame.

When you invite some friends over and put up some easels and paint together, that is the spirit of Belle Ame. Especially if you share something interesting you have learned about fine art.

When you have an inspiring book you are reading and are dying to talk about it and get a few friends together who also read the book, that is the spirit of Belle Ame.

When your teenager invites some neighbor kids to the back yard and helps them put on a simple play for the neighborhood with simple costumes and props, or puts on a puppet show, that is the spirit of Belle Ame.

When you invite people over to listen to a musician play for you, or make music together, that is the spirit of Belle Ame.

When you get together—all ages—and crochet granny

squares to make afghans for the homeless shelter and carry on conversations while you work, that is the spirit of Belle Ame.

When you offer to organize a choir for families just for the joy of singing, that is the spirit of Belle Ame.

When you organize a storytelling group to practice the art of storytelling, that is the spirit of Belle Ame.

I hope you are getting the idea. There is no end of possibilities. The Spirit of Belle Ame is the spirit of gathering and connecting and engaging in the arts. We are terribly disconnected to each other and to life. Loneliness is the true pandemic. This is about bringing people together and allowing them to engage in activities that have become relics of the past but are so needed today.

"We are taught nearly everything except the one thing we ought to know—the art of living."

The arts are healing. The arts create bonds. The arts are universal in appeal. In a world divided in so many ways, the arts can bring us together.

If you listened to my podcast #200, the arts have been the means of survival under oppressive regimes. Now is the time to find ways to connect with each other in meaningful ways. This is the spirit of Belle Ame.

Your home then becomes a safe place of refuge; an oasis in a desert; the calm in the middle of a storm.

These are the kinds of activities you want to bring your children together for and to satisfy their craving to be with other kids. This is what a school for the heart looks like.

This is the antidote to the soul-crushing world of electronics.

But not without its challenges to get there. I can see the eye rolling and the groans you may face. But I have also seen the change once our young people experience "real" things.

Now, there is another part to this Belle Ame Dream.

I have envisioned a campus for learning—a home for us as Mothers of Influence. It would be a place for mothers to

come and connect with other mothers and learn and refresh themselves. It would be a place for families to be immersed in real things. It would be a place to establish the spirit of the Danish Folk High Schools where young adults can come and spend time with other young adults and be immersed in a world away from the world.

The Spirit of Belle Ame is to soften and purify hearts.

It would be a place to gain deeper appreciation for the Arts. I see week long retreats for music, for painting and handicrafts, for poetry, for storytelling and writing, bringing in guest instructors who have not forgotten God. It would be a place to be inspired and be filled with Light—and then taking that Light home and shining it there.

It would be a place for learning homemaking skills and learning to create, as Sally Clarkson describes, Life-Giving Homes. After all, the home, as Orison Swett Marden wrote, "Is the holy of holies…and in it lies the very secret of human progress…. The highest civilizations have scarcely as yet glimpsed the possibilities of home." We aim to expand that vision of the possibilities of home. The home is central to the design of the campus.

In short, it is a place to learn the art of living. It is a Center for Artful Living.

For some years, I have seen images of this center for learning flash through my mind. It is in a peaceful setting away from the noise of the city. There are lush lawns and shady trees and flowers. So many flowers. There is a body of water for reflection and meditation. I see swans swimming, like the lake near my home I went to for refuge when we were going through a season of personal turmoil.

I have seen homes in these flashes of impressions with rocking chairs on porches all facing inward around a beautiful parklike setting—a Secret Garden—like the book. The homes are warm and inviting and restful—places to nourish bodies and souls.

There are kitchen gardens out back. There is a stream going through the Secret Garden with a bridge over the stream.

There is a large gathering room with paned windows looking out at the trees where people gather to learn and dance and sing. There's a library of old books and cozy gathering areas for conversation and for making music.

I have even seen horse trails meandering through groves of trees. There are fire pits for campfire stories and greenhouses and beehives and vineyards and orchards.

I have seen an outdoor amphitheatre for simple plays or musical performances. It is an immersionary experience to be there, connecting with real things and with real people, and above all, connecting with God. It is like being immersed in Living Waters. It is where eyes are made to see, ears are made to hear and hearts are made to feel all the Unseen things of the world—the Eternal things, as Paul teaches. It is a place of healing.

The dream is becoming reality.

We have acquired a beautiful 160-acre property in the heart of America in Missouri. The first thing I noticed when I walked the property were sheep grazing in a pasture by a beautiful spring fed pond. The sheep grazing was significant to me. Built into the Belle Ame at Home community, which I will tell you about in a minute is what we are calling pasture learning. Although it wasn't planned, the initials of Belle Ame at Home spell BAAH and our first community art event was creating this beautiful painting of a shepherd, reminding us that "My sheep hear My voice."

We understand that "True education is between a child's soul and God" and our work is about softening and opening hearts so we can hear His voice.

This property was primarily used by a sheep farmer who loves his sheep. Raising sheep has been in his family for generations. There are already orchards with mature fruit trees and



The Little Shepherdess by Johann Baptist Hofner

woods with streams running through them, already cleared for creating walking trails. There are buildings including a large barn and two homes.

The prophet Isaiah saw our day and said, "They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat…. [M]ine elect shall long enjoy the works of their hands."

Enjoying the work of our own hands is in the spirit of Belle Ame. We need to re-learn many of the skills that are being lost. As gardens are created and houses are built and decorated, skilled workers will work beside your family members to teach them new skills, hopefully with little or no cost to members of our community. And we will be broadcasting out to our Belle Ame community many of the learning activities that will be going on live at the campus.

We hope in the future other campuses can be built as the

spirit of Belle Ame grows, all for the purpose of learning that which can be taken back to your own homes, neighborhoods and communities. It's like scattering seeds.

Our desire is to inspire a new generation to move away from being consumers and instead become creators and producers. We have adopted the motto of James Oglethorpe who, with a group of other English nobleman, devoted themselves to lifting others. *Non sibi sed aliis*! Not for himself but for others! The campus itself is meant to be a living monument to the power of small and simple means built in a spirit of unity and love.

Can we look forward to the future and imagine our granddaughters admiring the beautiful campus their mothers built for them?

Picture bringing your family to plant flowers and trees and learning to build homes. We send our kids on humanitarian expeditions to other countries. Why not have a place here for them to learn to work together and play together and have meaningful experiences tougher? And a place for you to gather with like-minded families?

Belle Ame at Home (BAAH) is a community platform that has been created as our primary fundraising arm for this non-profit venture. Joining our BAAH community is how you can be part of growing our Belle Ame Center for Artful Living. You can learn more at belleameathome.com and belleamedream.org.

On New Years Day, 1917, a young man named Hubert Eaton stood on a hill overlooking a gloomy cemetery overgrown with weeds. The place wasn't far from where I grew up in Southern California. He had just lost a fortune in a silver mine and needed a job. A friend told him a job had opened managing this cemetery. As he stood on that hill, he suddenly had a vision open up and he didn't see it as it was, but rather what it could be. He not only transformed that cemetery—which is now known as Forest Lawn in Glendale, California.

He transformed the whole business of dying. He knew he had succeeded when a couple wrote and asked if they could be married at the cemetery.

How did he do it? He brought in fine art from around the world, and musicians and planted trees and flowers and everything about life and living and the glorious hope of eternal life. Central to the design—his life long quest—was a Christ who smiles and loves us. The Good Shepherd.

My message to you is that which can transform the business of dying can also transform a dying world. Hubert Eaton grew up not far from where we are building our Belle Ame Center in Missouri. I know he would be very pleased with the work we are doing.

The day he stood on that hill, he sat down and wrote a Builder's Creed that is preserved in stone at the entrance of the cemetery. I don't think he would mind one bit if we borrowed from the spirit of his writing and adapted it as our Builders Creed—a message to those who will read it after we are all gone.

> We—your mothers and grandmothers—believe in a happy Eternal life.
>
> We believe, most of all, in a Christ that smiles and loves you as we know He loves us.
>
> We therefore, prayerfully resolve on this day in 2023—we shall endeavor to build at Belle Ame a place of learning as unlike other places of learning as sunshine is unlike darkness, as eternal life is unlike death. We shall try to build at Belle Ame a great park, filled with towering trees, sweeping lawns, splashing fountains, singing birds, beautiful statuary, cheerful flowers, noble architecture with interiors full of light and color.
>
> We believe these things educate and uplift a community.
>
> Belle Ame shall become a place where lovers new and old shall love to stroll and watch the sunset's glow, planning for the future or reminiscing of the past; a place

where artists study and sketch, where musicians bring heaven to earth; where poets touch the dull gray day and set it aflame with color and sunshine, and story-tellers stir slumbering souls.

A place where the broken-hearted will be healed, the captive will be liberated, and the blind be made to see the Unseen things of the world—the Eternal things.

The sorrowing soul will be soothed and strengthened because it will be God's Garden.

The Builders' Creed, the Builders' Dream

I found it interesting that he didn't sign his own name.

Nor will we sign ours for we are but tools in the Hands of the Master Builder.

I have a dream. I hope it is your dream now, too. Mother-love works magic on humanity. Organized mother-love can work miracles.

Corragio!

On a recent visit to the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., in one of the rooms, I happened upon a sculpture of a little girl—*La Petite Pensee*—that so captured my heart, I couldn't stop looking at her.



What she was telling me, I have no words to describe. But I didn't want to leave her. When I got home, I couldn't stop thinking about her. I wondered who the artist was who could have created such an exquisite work of art. His name was Thomas Ball and I found an autobiography of him online. At the end of his book was advice that he gave to young artist friends and as I read it, I thought, these words are for you, too, because I see you as artists—creators of children's hearts,

caregivers of their inner kingdoms. And sometimes the work is discouraging. We feel ordinary and inadequate. We feel like we aren't doing a very good job. The work isn't turning out the way we hoped it would. So let me repeat his words:

"My most bitter tears have been shed at the completion of some work, when I felt that I had done all I could do, and yet found it so far from what I had hoped to make it, and that it must go out to the world with all its imperfections. Falling upon my knees in agony, praying for comfort and faith to believe the present disappointment to be for my ultimate good, I have arisen comforted and strengthened in the hope that perhaps I had worked better than I knew…. Imperfect and unsatisfactory as all my work seems to me, I shudder when I think of what they might have been, and what I might have been, without the firm belief that He was ever at my right hand as long as I was true to myself—to bear me up when I would have fainted; to help me when my strength left me.

"I write this for the encouragement of my young brothers in art; not those arrogant and proud ones who believe in nothing but their own strength and will, jealous at even a hint of any assistance from a higher power…. But to that sensitive, retiring one who shrinks from the sound of approbation—to him I would say Corragio! [Courage] You are stronger than you imagine; be but sincere and conscientious in your efforts; work away with all your might. Strive to live a pure and clean life, and to improve the talents God has given you, and leave the rest to Him. He will not let you fail. Keep up a good heart; cultivate a cheery disposition."

Concluding Thoughts

Finally, here we are at the last chapter. We've spent a lot of hours together. Thank you for taking time to read and consider the ideas I have shared. Maybe in the beginning you started reading because you wanted to pick up a few tips or ideas to use in your homeschool or to supplement what your children are learning in public school. Or maybe you love the arts as I do and you were looking for ways to cultivate your own heart. I hope you found something you were looking for.

But if you made it through all these little talks, you may have picked up an underlying message; the real desire in my heart that drives me to spend hours every day looking for ways I can help you. The last thing I'm interested in is developing curriculum I can market. I have bigger problems on my mind that are best expressed in these words I copied down from the introduction to an old book about the fifteenth century world of Henry V:

"Old faiths had lost their inspiration. Old forms of government were breaking down. The very fabric of society seemed to be on the point of dissolution."

Does that sound familiar?

Our children are growing up in a world on the verge of economic collapse. Terrorism and senseless killing is no longer something that happens in lands far away. It happens in our schools and our shopping malls. Hateful rhetoric as well as sleaze and vulgarity fill our air waves. Corruption is rampant. Faith is under attack. Families are falling apart. Men's hearts are failing them.

We're not the first generation to face these things. Every

generation has had troubles of their own, but listen to the words of hope that follow the statement from Henry V that I just read:

"It is, however, part of the irony of history that a great ideal too often attains its finest expression only when the period of decline has already commenced."

And then it continues:

"[T]he remedy for present evils was sought not in the creation of a new order but rather in the restoration of an old ideal. To bring back the Golden Past must be the work of a hero who could revive in his own person its virtues."

"Henry of Monmouth, deriving his inspiration from the past, was the champion of unity against the forces of disintegration."

There you have it. My husband and I do everything we do here at Libraries of Hope because we're hoping that from your home, "champions of unity against the forces of disintegration" will emerge; that in your home will be found heroes who can "revive in their own persons" the Golden ideals of the past: Faith, Family, Freedom and Virtue. I can't stop terrorists from killing. I'm not smart enough to fix our economy. I can't reform corrupt politicians. But there is something I can do and so can you. As Confucius says:

> To put the world right in order
> we must first put the nation in order;
> To put the nation in order,
> we must first put the family in order;
> To put the family in order,
> we must first cultivate our personal life,
> we must first set our hearts right.

Well-educated hearts. That IS the solution to a world spinning out of control. By small and simple means are great things accomplished. Many people are working hard to make sure our children have well-trained minds. That is good. But

who is tending to their hearts?

These are the differences between mind and heart as I now understand them:

The mind is informed.
The heart is inspired.

The mind feeds on facts.
The heart feeds on Truth.

The mind asks, "Why?"
The heart wonders, "Why not?"

The mind is molded through questioning.
The heart asks its own questions.

The mind is verbose.
The heart relishes brevity.

The mind seeks pleasure, which is usually temporal and temporary.
The heart seeks joy, which is spiritual and eternal.

The mind clings to reason.
The heart clings to faith.

The mind often feels superior because of its vast knowledge.
The heart often feels humbled by all it doesn't yet understand.

The mind is critical.
The heart is compassionate.

The mind thinks.
The heart feels.

The mind seeks to be understood.
The heart longs to understand.

The mind is knowledgeable.
The heart is wise.

I have noticed a growing interest in classical education with its trivium of grammar, logic and rhetoric. The sponge of the young child's mind is used for memorizing facts. And then, students are taught to use those facts to logic and reason and finally, the highest stage is rhetoric where a student is taught to write persuasively so that he can convince others of the truth he has arrived at by means of his carefully trained logic and reason.

I would be more sold on the process if mankind hadn't demonstrated such a proneness to err in his calculations. I find few minds more narrow or less open to change than the mind that has arrived at a perceived point of truth by a process of reason and logic alone. Much of the contention in our world arises from opposing viewpoints, with both sides confident of their correctness. It seems our world would benefit by a little less persuading and a whole lot more seeking to understand the other's viewpoint, which is the function of the heart.

There is another way to persuade others of Truth, as demonstrated by One who has successfully influenced and led more people to Truth than anyone else. And He never wrote a single persuasive paper that we're aware of. His method for spreading Truth was very simple: He let his light shine and commended to us that we do the same. Our life, He taught, is the open book for all to read. How a person feels in our presence will be remembered long after our words have been forgotten.

The pathway for this kind of learning also has three parts: Faith, Hope and Charity. As I have said, our role as parents is to prepare our children's hearts to be inspired, give them good things to hope for, and teach them the right-use of all things in love. Everything I have presented to you have these three things in mind.

The rest we can safely leave in the hands of a Heavenly Parent, for true education, as noted before, is between a

child's soul and God.

I know I'm a dreamer. But I'm hoping you're a dreamer, too. I copied these words about dreamers in my notes: "[Dreamers] are the chosen few—the Blazers of the way—who never wear doubt's bandage on their eyes—who starve and chill and hurt, but hold to courage and to hope, because they know that there is always proof of truth for them who try—that only cowardice and lack of faith can keep the seeker from his chosen goal, but if his heart be strong and if he dream enough and dream it hard enough, he can attain, no matter where men failed before.

"Walls crumble and the empires fall. The tidal wave sweeps from the sea and tears a fortress from its rocks. The rotting nations drop from off Time's bough, and only things the dreamers make live on."[30]

So it only seems fitting to leave you with a dream I had that sums up what I've been trying to say. But it's the kind of dream that it's not really about me. It's about you, too, and I hope you'll place yourself in the dream. Only your heart will understand it.

I dreamed I was in a large, noisy hall filled with people. There were long rows of cafeteria style tables throughout the hall and my sense was life revolved around set feeding times throughout the day. At certain times, we were all expected to sit down and eat what was placed in front of us and we all ate the same thing. It didn't feel like a bad thing. It's just how it was.

In my dream, I noticed a door I evidently hadn't noticed before. There were no windows in this hall, so I didn't know what was on the other side. Curious, I slipped over to the door, looked around to make sure no one was watching me, turned the knob and stepped outside into a thick fog. I could

[30] Herbert Kaufman in "The Dreamers" found in Joe Mitchell Chapple's *A Treasure Chest of Memories* (1905).

hear the sound of horse hooves coming closer, and soon a horse-drawn carriage broke through the fog and a tall, lanky man stepped out. He beckoned me to follow him, and I did. I had to practically run to keep up with him, but I remember how drawn I was to the features of his face. He smiled at me and his eyes were so warm, I didn't feel afraid at all. At first, he didn't say anything to me, but after awhile he introduced himself. He said he was Hans Christian Andersen. Just then the fog lifted, and I found he had led me to the most glorious meadow you can ever imagine! Everywhere, as far as the eye could see, were flowers of every color. White billowy clouds floated across a deep-blue sky and I felt the warmth of the sun on my face. Butterflies fluttered among the flowers and the breezes carried the songs of hundreds of birds. I could barely breathe, it was so beautiful.

My friend held out his hand and motioned for me to lead the way along the path that now meandered through this glorious meadow. At first I was anxious—I was going to miss my 2:30 feeding time. What would the people say? But soon, the joys of the meadow so filled my heart, I didn't care what they thought.

The two of us spent all afternoon in the meadow. My friend patiently waited while I stopped to take in every new site and discovery at every bend in the path. Then, just as the path ended, he said that he had to leave me. We were standing in a grove of tall trees and I told him that I didn't know where to go from there. He simply smiled and looked heavenward: "God directs."

Suddenly the scene changed and I was back in the noisy, crowded feeding hall. Immediately I was surrounded by angry peers. Where had I been? Didn't I know I had missed my 2:30 feeding time? I told them I had just spent the entire afternoon in the most glorious meadow with Hans Christian Andersen himself. I wanted to tell them more, but they rolled their eyes at me in disbelief and left me to myself.

But it didn't matter. All the joy of the meadow was stored in my heart—and I knew it would remain with me, always.

The dream ended and I woke up.

Maybe it was just coincidence, but a day or two later at a library used book sale, I happened to walk by a shelf of books and one title caught my eye: It was *The Fairy Tale Story of My Life* by Hans Christian Andersen. I didn't know anything about his life. I had only read his fairy tales and I don't remember having previously seen his picture, but there on the cover was an image of the friend of my dreams. I opened the book to read the first page, and at the end of the first paragraph, he had written, "The history of my life will say to the world what it says to me—There is a loving God, who directs all things for the best."

I, too, believe in a God who directs all things for the best. And as you turn to Him, He will direct and guide you as you lead your children through this glorious meadow of learning that has been prepared for us. May the ideas I've presented help to bring you closer to Him, that you, with your family, may live happily and joyfully ever after.

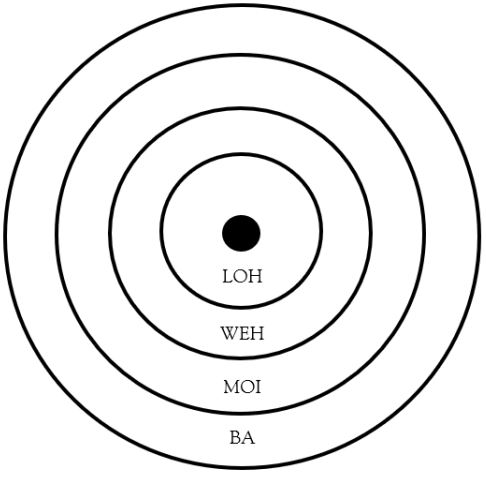
Where to Go From Here

My daughter came home from a Mothers of Influence meeting not long ago and said the question had come up: Who are we? Are we Libraries of Hope (LOH)? Are we Well-Educated Heart (WEH)? Are we Mothers of Influence (MOI)? And now do we call ourselves Belle Ame (BAAH)?

All the alphabet soup gets so confusing.

Who are we?

So I sat down at my desk with a paper and pen and considered the journey I have been on and I found myself drawing circles and suddenly it all fit together so nicely into one grand whole. As I've shared this simple illustration with others, it's like the light goes on and it all makes sense and more importantly, they see clearly where they are in their own personal journey.



Although I didn't recognize it as I was going through the process, I now see that I was going through the same Pattern for Learning and Creation I have been teaching you.

It all started with a desire and a question. I told you how I was working with a friend many years ago now who had adopted a little school in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya. Our traditional way of thinking about school and education didn't seem to make any sense for them.

So the thought struck me, if we could learn God's purposes for education and discover His methods—if we could align ourselves and live in harmony with His ways—I knew we would be successful in blessings the lives of these little children.

Notice: I had ASKed a question that sprang from within my own heart—where all lasting learning begins—and then I started SEEKing and searching for answers. I started with sacred writings and then read educational method books, but it wasn't until I happened upon the writings of the heart educators of the late 19th century that the lights started turning on.

It was while reading the same books I share with you in the Forgotten Classics Family Library that dots started connecting and patterns started emerging and the philosophy of the Well-Educated Heart was born. Another way of saying it is that I was now ready to KNOCK, and understanding started being unfolded to me and the right-use for the knowledge I was gaining.

Had I not taken the time to study, I wouldn't have given the Spirit anything to work with in giving me understanding. There would have been no Well-Educated Heart philosophy.

But the creation process didn't stop there. God always multiplies and gathers. It wasn't just for me.

He began preparing the hearts of many mothers, and when the time was right, they were ready to come together to learn and apply the principles in Mothers of Influence Circles.

It's one thing to have a vision of a great painting you want to paint; another thing to master the skills to paint it. Mothers came together to strengthen and support each other while they learned and applied the lessons.

Then came the fruit of that learning; a way to express and share the fulness of their hearts and to scatter more seeds so that the planting and growth process could start all over again and spread outward.

Belle Ame is the fruit of all that comes before.

Notice the inner circles were about desire and vision, then came principles and application and finally the right-use of all that was being learned. The right-use being that you are using your knowledge and wisdom to bless as many lives as possible.

The direction is inward-out.

And each circle is dependent on the circle before.

For example, if you are attempting to apply the Well-Educated Heart philosophy of learning but you aren't spending any time in the Libraries of Hope books, you are missing vital nutrients to feed the growth process. Do you remember what I shared from the book of Enoch in the introductory talk? Enoch saw our day when he said:

"Sinners will alter and pervert the words of righteousness in many ways, and will speak wicked words, and lie, and practice great deceits, and write books concerning their words."

But "to the righteous and the wise shall be given books of joy, of integrity and of great wisdom. To them shall books be given in which they will rejoice and acquire the knowledge of every upright path."

I believe we have been given those books. They are filled with light and truth. How do I judge that? I test them. This is my criteria:

Does it enlarge my soul?

Does it enlighten my understanding?

Does it taste delicious to me?

Does it contain living ideas that sprout and begin to grow?

Does it cause me to have more faith in God?

Does it inspire me to love others?

As I have spent time with the writers of these books, I have found them to be rooted and grounded in the love of God which is expressed in their desire to help and lift others. They love the children for whom they wrote and wanted to teach them the ways of happiness.

I have only mined part of the treasure available to us. By all means! Do your own excavation. But I offer you something to begin with.

Another example. If you join a Mothers of influence Circle but you don't spend any time in the writings found in Libraries of Hope or study the philosophy through Catch the Vision, you are going to have a gaping hole in your experience. It will be hollow. There is nothing to feed those outer layers. And without common purpose, it will likely fall apart.

Likewise, it's not just putting on a Belle Ame activity that makes it one—it's your spirit and your personality and your influence that will give it its power to change lives. Your influence will be felt because you are rooted and grounded in the love of God and it shines through you.

That power only comes as you start in the center and grow outward.

Everyone who is involved in the Belle Ame dream campus will need to go through all the circles for a very important reason—it helps to unify our vision and purpose. You may have heard me talk about the Sunday I asked my family what they wanted for dessert, and they all said, "Coconut dessert!" So I made coconut dessert.

But when I served it, we found that every single one of us had a different coconut dessert in mind.

We don't want to build a campus and then find out we are all seeing something different. This creative process of unifying a vision is a most important part of the work before us.

Now let's look at this from a couple of different angles.

If I turn these circles sideways, it reminds me of one of those baby stacking toys, only upside down. We're going to start with the smallest and work out. Notice how the center point, which I am identifying as the love of God, is in and through all of it. If you take Him out, the circles have nothing to hold them in place.

Nothing exists without a center—the nucleus of an atom, the hearth of the home, the heart of a body, the sun in the solar system, the capital of a nation. I believe all Light and Truth and Love shines from the center, which is God.

One thing that is not accurately displayed by this toy is that our circles are connected like a spiral working upward and outward. If you cut the spiral, you've severed it from that which gives movement and life. You have to work from the center and go from there.

Notice the shape—it's our tower flipped over symbol—from within, out.

Let's try another way of looking at it.

We have adopted the symbol of the Cedars of Lebanon for Mothers of Influence. The symbol came as a heavenly gift to Marley one day—and peeling back the many layers of its meaning and significance has revealed what a perfect symbol it is for us to use.

The Cedar of Lebanon is noted for its longevity and resistance to decay. There are trees that are over 3000 years old. They have endured through tumultuous times. Their wood is prized. Solomon sent for the Cedars of Lebanon when he was ready to build his temple. The trees flourish on the high mountains.

The trees are exceptionally slow growing. All the emphasis in the early years is on root development and internal strength. One of their secrets for endurance is their roots run deep. For every ten feet above ground, the root may travel 30 feet below ground. The tips of the roots have properties that

make it possible to even bore through hard rock in search of a water source. But once it finds that everlasting spring of water deep within the earth, it can endure extreme conditions at the surface.

Cedars of Lebanon don't bear fruit for the first 50 years but then will continue bearing long into their old age—even if they're severely injured.

Its abundant sap is a natural repellent to pests and fungi.

As it grows upward, it reaches its branches outward and grows right into the foliage of the neighboring trees that now support each other. Sometimes they even grow together as one.

The tree is known for its healing and purification processes and its spiritual protection and it gives off a sweet fragrance.

Can you see the likeness here? We see each Mother of Influence as a Cedar of Lebanon, rooted and grounded in the love of God. If you don't yet have that faith in God, if you can but desire that there is a God out there who loves and cares about you, it will be enough to start.

We spend our early years on root development and internal strength. We then grow upward as we reach higher and eventually outward where we link arms with others in an encircling reach of protection and strength and support. The growth process is inward-out.

It's important that each Mother goes through this growth process independently, although supported by community. She must go through the process of Asking, Seeking and Knocking.

As I was pondering these things over the last several days, I woke up one morning with the thought to now look up the banyan tree.

Banyan trees are also very large. They can cover acres. But the banyan tree does not grow from planting a seed in the ground. Rather, the banyan seed seeks a host tree and

attaches itself to it and feeds from the host. As its roots begin to grow, they start to strangle the roots of the host tree until they kill its host. The banyan tree then starts sending roots down from its own branches to secure itself to the ground. And the fruit it bears is nasty.

I feel this comes as a caution to us. If someone creates a Mother of Influence circle or organizes a Belle Ame activity, calling it that, or maybe someone is promoting something as being based on the Well-Educated Heart, but she hasn't gone through the core process of asking and seeking and knowing for herself, which means reading the books and going through Catch the Vision—and if she isn't rooted in the love of God—she may be bringing in ideas and traditions contrary to all we are trying to do, perhaps innocently, but as they get wrapped around the roots of the host, these ideas may begin to strangle out the purpose for which we are coming together and even kill the host.

This is why we are asking that if you desire to identify yourself as a Mother of Influence, that you will go through the growth process that we are all going through as I have attempted to illustrate with these circles, that we might be working in harmony with each other and have a common vision that we are working from.

Some of you may come and stop at the first circle. You dabble a little bit in the books and that's all you're interested in. That's fine. They are there for you to use.

Some of you will expand to the next circle and study the philosophy for yourself and adapt parts of it according to your understanding. That is also fine. You may even try to do it without reading any of the books in the Libraries of Hope library. As long as this is done at a personal level, it is fine.

It's when you start to gather a community that you need to be sure you haven't left a gap in your circles. To say that you are doing a Well-Educated Heart activity without having spent time reading and studying from Libraries of Hope or

having gone through the Catch the Vision course would be a misrepresentation.

The story is told that many years ago, a young boy visited his uncle who worked in the lumber business. They were looking at the trees in the lumber camp when the boy noticed a very tall tree standing alone on the hilltop. Full of excitement, the boy showed his uncle the towering tree. "Look at that big tree!" he exclaimed. "It will make a lot of good lumber, won't it?"

To the boy's surprise, his uncle shook his head. "No," he said, "that tree will not make a lot of good lumber. It might make a lot of lumber but not a lot of good lumber. When a tree grows off by itself, too many branches grow on it. Those branches produce knots when the tree is cut into lumber. The best lumber comes from trees that grow together in groves. The trees also grow taller and straighter when they grow together."

Women grow stronger and straighter when they have the support and encouragement of others. No one needs to make this journey alone. So you are invited to join our Mothers of Influence community in Mighty Networks. There are two levels in this community. One level is open to everyone. There will be many opportunities to support you as you go through Catch the Vision but also to support you as a mother. This community is a place to connect.

Once you complete Catch the Vision, which you will have done by reading this book, you can let us know and we will welcome you into the second level. You will now qualify to lead a Mothers of Influence circle and there will be ways to dive deeper as you make your way through the Mother's University. This inner circle is where we hope to grow mentors and leaders to go out and lift others and bring them into our community.

We have work to do. It is hoped our encircling reach will become a shroud of protection and refuge in a world of grow-

ing uncertainty.

So back to the original question my daughter posed: Who are we?

We are Mothers of Influence, rooted in the love of God, studying the writings of the past to understand the course corrections necessary for those who follow, and spreading the spirit of Belle Ame far and wide.

We are gathering a community of families who are learning to restore the lost arts of educating hearts. We seek to preserve a culture of faith, freedom and family and a love of the True, the Good and the Beautiful.

Some of you may feel frustrated because I haven't told you exactly what to do. I'm afraid I will never tell you exactly what to do because this is a personal journey between you and God and He customizes it to fit you. But as you continue to fill your heart with new ideas and thoughts, over time, you will begin to see the harmonies, the connections, the patterns, the lessons that will begin to emerge. You will learn by experience what works and what doesn't work for you.

Shall I remind you again that you can't speed grow a garden or speed grow a tree? Especially a Cedar of Lebanon.

Now, if you want to continue the journey, where do you go from here? If you go to our website at librariesofhope.com and look for Section Six in Catch the Vision, you will see a button that says, "Continue the Journey." You will then have a number of options open to you. I'll leave you to explore and discover what is offered to you there.

As the Psalmist sang:

"The righteous [woman]…will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. (Psalm 92:29)

"The trees of the Lord are well cared for—the Cedars of Lebanon that He planted." (Psalm 104:16 NLT)

"…and birds of every kind will nest under it; they will nest in the shade of its branches." (Ezekiel 17:23)

I often share the first part of a Frances Willard quote:

"Mother-love works magic for humanity." It's now time to place more emphasis on the second half: "Organized mother-love works miracles."

We hope you will join us.



In the snowy mountains of northern Lebanon
There is a small grove of trees.
The people call it the Cedars of God.

The mountains were once covered by these trees.
They are extraordinarily strong and majestically tall.
The prized trees were revered and sacred.

Today there is only a remnant.
Cedars of Lebanon have a special significance.
The righteous shall grow like a Cedar of Lebanon,
Flourish, bring forth fruit.

The roots of the trees run exceptionally deep.
This slow and methodical growth anchors the tree
and keeps it connected to an underground spring.

Then begins the great climb upward
Growing for thousands of years,
The towering trees stand as devoted sentinels.

As they age the crown begins to flatten and the
Side branches form great reaching arms.
Ezekiel called it a shadowing shroud—
and encircling shelter and refuge.

We are sisters, all part of the same forest.
We are pushing our roots deeper, striving upward in our learning
And ever reaching outward to influence for good.

By small and simple things…are great things brought to pass.

We do not need more material development,
we need more spiritual development.
We do not need more intellectual power,
we need more moral power.
We do not need more knowledge,
we need more character.
We do not need more government,
we need more culture.
We do not need more law,
we need more religion.
We do not need more of the things that are seen,
we need more of the things that are unseen.

It is on that side of life that it is desirable
to put the emphasis at this present time

If that side is strengthened,
the other side will take care of itself.

It is that side which is the foundation of all else.
If the foundation be firm, the superstructure will stand.

--Calvin Coolidge



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